

INDIE MUSIC IN POST-BOMB BALI: PARTICIPANT PRACTICES, SCENE
SUBJECTIVITIES

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This dissertation focuses on music practices that have been largely uncharted in Balinese music studies. In the twelve years following the 2002 terrorist bombings, during which time an economic downturn and subsequent accelerated tourism development and urbanization transformed southern Bali, several rock bands rose to national and international acclaim and, alongside other music professionals committed to the creative, professional, and social vitality of local music making, built a thriving independent music scene. By 2014, Bali was home to some of the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful bands in the Indonesian recording industry's history—though industry accolades were often tangential achievements for many music producers. What *did* preoccupy them is key to understanding the scene's historic growth and staying power. Shared preoccupations with style and genre, creativity, professional ethics, activism, and belonging deepened social bonds by coalescing attention around core social, environmental, and musical issues. Based on six years of knowing Bali's indie music producers as research interlocutors, colleagues, and friends, this study examines scene practices including rehearsals, performances, album production, tours, music activism, and “hanging out” (*nongkrong*) as conduits by which core ideals were created and shared. Research methods, derived from anthropology and ethnomusicology, included participation in scene practices, recorded interviews, casual conversations, and attention to “material culture,” including hard copy and digital albums, music videos, and band merchandise. By applying theories derived from sociological phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, this study argues that habitual, music-related activities, as social

interaction, establish subjective preoccupations that, as they come to be mutually valued, strengthen social alliances, sustain otherwise untenable music professions, and influence broader social and environmental issues. In post-bomb Bali, music-related practices were strategies for defining social relationships and inspiring collective action to both make a music scene happen and safeguard an island's diverse artistic, societal, and natural ecology.

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Chapter 1: “Freedom Skies”¹: Indie Music in Post-bomb Bali

“Freedom Skies” – By Gede Robi

*You can bite and you can feed
You can't taste what you don't need
You can cry and you can bleed
Can you temper your greed?*

*What about these skies above complex lives
What about these skies that shine a light*

*In rebellion let us build a fire
To burn away these lies
Letting go of fear of life
And fly to freedom skies...*

*What about these skies, the way they change our lives
With these freedom skies we'll shine our light*

Paradise Lost, Freedom Gained

In the years following the 2002 terrorist bombings that killed 202 people and devastated the local economy, Bali was transformed by accelerating tourism, urbanization, and regional autonomy legislation. While this period is often described as a time of recovery from the social trauma and economic damage of a terrorist attack (Allen and Palermo 2005), for several Balinese rock bands, it also marked the birth and growth of their professional careers. Superman Is Dead (SID) rose from being local legends who staged Bali's first underground rock concerts to become Southeast Asia's most well-known punk band (and the first Indonesian band to land on the Billboard Charts). Navicula skyrocketed from relative obscurity as Bali's first grunge band to be named Indonesia's Rock Ambassadors in 2012 by *Rolling Stone Indonesia* and record in Los

¹ Song by Gede Robi Supriyanto, *Son of a Witch*. English lyrics by Kayti Denham (2014).

Angeles's Record Plant under the tutelage of legendary American rock producer Alain Johannes. SID, Navicula, and rockabilly act The Hydrant all secured recording contracts with major international labels. Meanwhile, Bali gained its first professional recording studios and record labels (Pregina, Antida, and Electrohell Records). The professionalization of rock music in Bali strengthened the local independent music scene which, built on the bedrock of formative underground artists in the 1990s (Baulch 2007), was now poised to compete with Indonesia's music industry heartland, Jakarta, for producing the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful bands.

This dissertation focuses on music traditions largely uncharted in music studies of Bali. The *indie music scene* (or *skena indie*, as it was also called), composed of music producers united by a disdain for the monolithic mainstream of the Indonesian popular music industry and deep commitment to the creative, professional, and social vitality of local music-making, helped to establish an industry of music professionals comparable in output, national influence, and genre diversity to the national recording industry. Commercial recognition and financial success were tangential issues for scene members, however. What *did* preoccupy them is key to understanding the scene's historical growth and staying power.

Based on my six years of knowing Bali's indie music producers as research interlocutors, coworkers, and friends, I examine indie scene participant practices including rehearsals, performances, recording sessions, album production, tours, music activism, and "hanging out" (*nongkrong*) as the conduits by which core ideals on musical facility, collaborative professionalism, and social engagement were created and shared. Through a theoretical framework derived from sociological phenomenology and

symbolic interactionism, I demonstrate that habitual, music-related activities, as social interaction, establish scene preoccupations such as music professionalism, social and environmental activism, and collective commitment that, as they come to be mutually valued, strengthen scene alliances and sustain an otherwise untenable music industry. Music-related practices are analyzed as strategies for strengthening social bonds, and interaction among individuals, through such practices, was a primary resource for the generation of scene subjectivities.

Similar to Ruth Finnegan's work on music-making in an English town ([2007] 1989), this study coalesces collective experience over an extended time period of ethnographic engagement, and similar to Emma Baulch's work on metal, punk, and reggae in 1990s Bali (2007), it focuses on the individuals² most actively involved in cultivating a music scene and a local recording industry. These scene leaders, or "acute observers" (1993 [1969], 41), in Herbert Blumer's terms, included recording artists, music critics, band managers, sound technicians, and venue and studio owners who were not only most deeply engaged in scene activities and invested in their continuation, but also who possessed the social power to influence which scenic preoccupations took center stage. In concert with ethnographic observations of scene practices, this study places primary importance on such acute observers' "stances" toward music (Berger 2009) by highlighting interviews in which they explicated core and valued scene

² Many of the bands at the center of this study were active during Baulch's research period, and Baulch interviewed and observed performances by Superman Is Dead, one of the focal groups for this current project. Baulch is a pioneer for studies of popular music in Bali specifically, and media studies and fan culture in Indonesia, more broadly (2013). I am indebted to her for her friendship and collegial support throughout the research, and particularly, the introductions she provided to some of the people who would become primary research participants.

practices and subjectivities.³ The study's wide time frame documents a critical period in the development of Bali's music industry. Immediately following the 2002 and 2005 bombings, musicians such as SID and Navicula played central roles in helping Bali's diverse residents to make sense of the tragedy and to socially and economically recover. In subsequent years, these artists and others claimed new opportunities to advance their creative projects, careers, and social and activist objectives.

I first visited Bali in 2005 as the guest student of Nyoman Suadin, a gamelan teacher at the University of Maryland whose parents, siblings, and extended family lived in Kerambitan, Tabanan, thirty kilometers northwest of indie music's urban heartland in Denpasar. It was there that I discovered bands like Navicula, Superman Is Dead, and Balinese language rock band Lolot in a cassette shop run by my Suadin's younger brother, Made Pasek. I asked Pasek if there were any rock bands in Bali, and he recommended three recordings that would change the direction of my graduate research for more than a decade to come: He gave me cassettes of Navicula's only Sony Music Indonesia release, *Alkemis*, (2005); Superman Is Dead's most popular album to date (also a Sony release), *Kuta Rock City* (2003); and Lolot's *Gumine Mangkin* (The World Today), which I would later learn was recorded and produced in Bali and sold more copies than any other Balinese-language album to date—more than 55,000. These recordings signified to me that Bali's local rock bands were not only well on their way to achieving national prestige, but that they also were engaged in a musical

³With few exceptions, interviews were conducted in Indonesia's lingua franca, *bahasa Indonesia*, though occasionally interlocutors inserted Balinese or English words or phrases in their speech. In the interest of readability for an English-speaking audience, all interview quotations are interpreted in English within the body of the text. The original is transcribed in the footnotes. Similarly, for any quoted sources published in the Indonesian language, I present the translation in the body of the text and footnote the original. All translations are my own.

cosmopolitanism, in Steven Feld's sense of the term, or the "unanticipated global entanglements" (2012, Loc. 90) that enabled their full internalization of rock, punk, grunge, and metal—genres I previously assumed fell far off the radar of Balinese music-making.

From Ashes

Three years before my first trip to Bali on 12 October 2002, two bombs were detonated in the crowded nightclub district of Kuta, southern Bali. 202 people—both foreign nationals on holiday and Indonesian citizens—were among the confirmed killed, though there were likely more undocumented migrant Indonesian workers among the missing (Lewis, et al. 2013, 21). Another 209 were injured. The men who claimed responsibility were affiliated with the Southeast Asian Islamist militant organization Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Twice Pub, a bar and live music venue run by Jerinx, drummer for punk band Superman Is Dead (SID) and one home base for Bali's underground music scene at the time, was located only seventy-five meters from the first bombing site. Jerinx and his bandmates were rehearsing on the second floor of the bar. Twice Pub sustained significant structural damage and a lengthy electrical outage following the blasts. Like hundreds of other businesses dependent on tourism, the venue closed its doors immediately. Three years later on October 1st, 2005, just as the island had nearly emerged from a major economic recession, it was struck again by terrorist bombings—this time, in Jimbaran Beach Resort and Kuta Town Square. In 2008, when I returned to Bali for the first time in three years, many people still claimed that the tourism industry had not yet made a full recovery. That would quickly change, however, and by 2014, the total

number of tourists visiting the island would double pre-bomb totals to reach more than four million (Dinas Pariwisata 2014).

Within months of the first bombings and Twice Pub's closing, several noteworthy occurrences were catalysts for an increase in performance and recording opportunities for Bali-based bands playing original music. SID garnered international media attention for post-bomb benefit concerts. Nationally distributed and positively received albums including SID's *Kuta Rock City* (2003) and psychedelic grunge band Navicula's *K.U.T.A.* (Keep Unity Through Art, 2004) celebrated Kuta and anticipated its recovery. In their efforts to pull through the economic downturn, a number of local venues changed their nightly entertainment lineup to include rock performances, in addition to—or sometimes in place of—the reggae and top-40 bands they usually hired to entertain tourists—this, in hopes of bringing in an untapped audience of *anak mudah* (young people) of Bali.⁴ Bands like SID, Navicula, The Hydrant, and Lolot gained a following that extended far beyond the island's shores: SID and The Hydrant boasted a fan base in Australia, and all four bands were well known in urban centers in Java and much of the rest of Indonesia. Both SID and Navicula secured five-album recording contracts with Sony Music Entertainment Indonesia (although Navicula left the label after just one album), and The Hydrant signed to the now-defunct EMI. The success of these bands and others carved a niche within the national popular music industry in which other Bali-based bands could enter and excel.

⁴ Global F&B giant Hard Rock Café was the only major touristic venue featuring local bands prior to the 2002 bombings.

Indie Music Today

In late 2008, when the ethnographic research for this study commenced, a local indie music scene, centralized within Bali's southern and most populated Badung regency, was thriving. SID was preparing to join the American Warped tour and promoting a new album release, *Angels and the Outsiders*—their fourth album under contract with Sony Entertainment Indonesia. The band's personnel continued to support the local music scene by hosting special performance events and financially backing or producing rising acts. Twice Pub reopened on Jalan Poppies II as Twice Bar, where Jerinx welcomed Bali's young punk and metal acts to perform for almost nightly gigs.⁵ Navicula was busy promoting their sixth studio album, *Salto* (Somersaults), and an upcoming, two-week Java tour. The alternative rock band Nymphaea's hit-single "Malaikatmu" (Your Angel) broadcasted nationally on the radio airwaves. A host of other bands were preparing for or celebrating debut and compilation album releases.

An increase in the number of Bali-based bands eager to record albums led to the establishment of reputable recording studios and production houses on the island, making song recording, mixing, and mastering simpler, quicker, and more affordable than ever before. OZ and The Beat radio stations both featured indie music hours. Locally owned and distributed magazines like *Bali Music Magazine*, print and online fanzines such as *IndieGo!*, and the website *Musikator*, run by Rudolf Dethu (former manager of SID and Navicula) and Robin Malau (guitarist for the disbanded Bandung metal band Puppen) featured articles, editorials, and reviews of indie bands, concerts, and tours. Finally, indie

⁵ See "Live Music Venues" in the research blog for a map indicating the geographic location of Twice Bar and other venues discussed (<http://baliunderground.com/live-music-venues/>).

artists and fans interacted at a feverish rate on the Internet through the social networking sites My Space, Facebook, and Twitter. They shared music-related news, including gig information and album launch announcements, as well as critical commentary on problems Bali faced, such as overdevelopment and water pollution. The Internet had become an invaluable means to both promote music and strengthen communal ties. An increasing number of artists, producers, managers, sound engineers, and music critics from Bali worked as professionals within Indonesia's music industry. No longer segregated by genre alliances as Baulch suggests they had been in the 1990s, music producers had discovered the compatible professional, musical, and social ideals that allowed them to work and socialize together in order to form a cohesive and stable indie scene.

I employ the term "indie," primarily as an innocuous and inclusive term to encompass the diverse styles of music that compose the scene, but also in response to its frequent usage by scene participants—particularly, in the early part of the research. What participants signified by employing the term, however, varied. For example, in my 2009 interview with Prima, frontman for rapcore band Geeksmile, he defined indie with an emphasis on independence from external meddling on album production:⁶

"For me personally, indie means doing all the work yourself. You do everything by yourself. You create your album design, you sell your albums yourself, you handle your own production. There isn't any interference. You enjoy the results yourself. If you work hard, you can become successful. If you work half-assed, you'll use up all your money, but you won't get anything out of it. That's the point. The more extreme your independence, the more substantial the results."⁷

⁶ See "Chapter 1" in the dissertation blog to listen to a recorded excerpt of Prima's comments on defining indie (<http://baliunderground.com/chapter-1-freedom-skies-indie-music-in-post-bomb-bali/>).

⁷ "Bagi saya personal, indie itu semuanya dikerjakan sendiri. *You done everything by yourself*. Kamu buat *design* album kamu, kamu jual sendiri, kamu produksi sendiri. Ga ada campur tangan orang. Ya, kamu yang nikmatin sendiri. Kalau kamu kerja keras, kamu dapat, kamu jadi orang kaya. Kalau kamu kerjanya setengah-setengah, ya uang kamu habis tapi kamu ga dapat apa-apa. *That's the point of it*. Semakin ekstrim, kita lakukan itu hasilnya akan semakin banyak."

Prima's former bandmate Yuri provided a definition that reflects globally circulating discourses on indie and DIY: "In my opinion—theoretically—indie was taken from the word 'independent.' Independent's nickname is indie. So it's about how much you can accomplish independently. So from that history, maybe indie evolved from the concept DIY, Do It Yourself. Maybe in the past, bands weren't able to get on major labels or were disappointed by major labels. So they began acting according to their own ideals. Whether that had to do with the music or distribution or other means..."⁸ Nova, from melodic punk band Scared of Bums defined indie as an ethic of newness and independence in music-making:

In my opinion, indie—the abbreviation for independent—means that we make something that we like. But we really work hard so that we can succeed. Indie means the freedom to not just follow a route that already exists. We find a route, or a gap that we get through. If we're on the main road, people generally have to go straight. So we make several turns. But our goals are the same. With indie music we move, not to follow what already exists. We have our own tricks for which way we want go to reach our goal. In my opinion, if we're already independent, we make an effort on our own, but maybe we take it seriously. If we're not serious, then it isn't possible that we'll succeed. But we must hold on to our principles so that we can also become a big success, like other bands. That's my opinion about indie" (Nova, interview, 2011).⁹

⁸ "Kalau buat saya, indie secara teori itu kan diambil dari kata *independent*. *Independent* nicknamanya indie gitu. Jadi sampai sejauh mana kamu bisa melakukan apa yang kamu sukai secara *independent*. Jadi dari sejarahnya juga mungkin indie berasal dari konsep DIY ya, *do it yourself*. Mungkin band-band dulu mereka tidak masuk major label atau merasa dikecewakan oleh major label, mereka mulai bertindak dengan idealisme mereka sendiri gitu. Baik itu soal musik, soal distribusi atau soal-soal lain."

⁹ "Kalau buat saya indie, kan singkatan *independent* kita berbuat sesuatu apa yang kita suka, apa yang kita bisa tapi yang bener-bener diseriusin buat kita berkembang. Indie itu artinya bebas tidak mengikuti jalur yang sudah ada. Kita cari jalur, celah yang lain biar bisa seperti itu juga. Kalau ini ada jalan, kalau secara umum orang tuh lurus, kita belok belok tapi tujuannya juga sama. Indie tuh, musik indie itu, kita bergerak tidak mengikuti apa yang sudah ada. Kita punya trik sendiri buat gimana caranya mencapai tujuan kita. Menurut saya tuh udah independen, berusaha sendiri dengan cara yang kita punya tapi kita mungkin diseriuskan lah. Kalau apa-apa ga serius ga mungkin berhasil tapi kita juga harus pegang prinsip itu sudah serius biar kita bisa juga bisa besar seperti band yang lain. Kalau menurut saya gitu indie."

Sari Nymphaea's¹⁰ definition echoed Prima's by emphasizing total independence from any external support, including for album recording, distribution, or promotion: "With indie, I think it's independence, right? So in terms of Do It Yourself, you could say that an indie band records their own music, creates their own songs, and continues on to distribute themselves as well as promote themselves. They even manage their own finances. It's not like what I am hearing now about bands that have entered a major label, but their music is called indie. I don't understand what they mean by that" (Sari, interview, 2010).¹¹ Sari's response corresponds to other artists' concern that signing with a major label would compromise their artistic independence and integrity. In reality, however, by the late 2000s, the hegemony of major labels over the recording industry had waned, and bands like Superman Is Dead proved to others that with smart management and careful attention to label contracts, creative and professional independence could be maintained under a major label contract.

This study highlights a particularly industrious and lucrative period of music-making in Bali, whereby several individuals created professional careers within the music industry. Excepting SID's success, however, many of the problems that plagued the

¹⁰ Throughout this work, I have elected to use preferred names provided by all research participants, rather than birth or surnames. Depending upon preference and common practice within the scene, I employ a first or second name after the initial introduction. Igo Blado, therefore, is referred to by his adopted first name, Igo, rather than his birthname, Teguh, while Rudolf Dethu is referred to by his second adopted name. Musicians were most frequently known among peers and the media by their first name, followed by the name of the their band. Thus, Robi was known not by his full birth name, Gede Robi Supriyanto, but rather as Robi Navicula. This may shift over time, however, or between music projects. When Robi began work on a solo acoustic project, he adopted the moniker Gede Robi to distinguish this project from his other bands. Similarly bandmate and guitarist Dankie Navicula took up his full name, Dadang SH Pranoto, when performing with his acoustic trio, and later adopted a nickname assigned to him by fans and friends, Pohon Tua (Old Tree).

¹¹ "Kalau indie sih, menurut saya ya independen ya. Jadi *do it yourself*, istilahnya. Eh kalau band bisa dibilang indie adalah band yang rekaman sendiri, buat lagu sendiri, terus mendistribusikan seharusnya sendiri juga sama promo apa juga sendiri. Ya istilah secara kasar keuangan dari sendiri gitu bukan yang ada yang apa saya dengar sekarang bandnya band major sudah masuk label tapi disebut music indie. Nggak ngerti saya maksudnya apa."

underground prior to 2002 remained as late as 2014. Jakarta was still the epicenter for the Indonesian music industry, and Bali-based artists struggled to overcome media notions that their music was *daerah* (regional) or *kampung* (provincial), labels that suggest they could not compete in terms of musical quality or professionalism with artists based in the nation's capital. With the exception of the tourist drought period following the 2002 bombings, indie bands remained largely excluded from earning a living by playing bars and clubs catering to tourists. Owners claimed to prefer to hire bands whose music would draw the kind of patrons who would consume plenty of alcohol. For this, they typically turned to what they described as the "party" groups—reggae bands that evoked a carefree, island lifestyle or top-40 bands or DJs spinning out the latest international pop hits to which audience members could sing along. For indie musicians, opportunities to perform were always scarcer, and gig fees were always too low to earn a sufficient living. Musicians playing hard genres (*musik keras*), such as punk and death metal, faced particular difficulty securing opportunities to play local venues. Album production and distribution remained prohibitively expensive for all but the most well known bands, as did nation-wide tours. Bands suffered high personnel and management turnover due in large part to the difficulty of achieving financial security within this (as yet) minor industry. All musicians maintained "day jobs" of some sort—for example, playing part-time in a top-40 band, working at a recording studio, or freelancing in graphic design—in order to support themselves and their families. Most frustrating for many artists, a loyal fan-base willing and able to purchase albums and pay for live performances continued to be difficult to secure in Bali.

Despite the challenges of making music on the fringe, the indie music scene endured. Musicians, music producers, band managers, sound engineers, venue owners, and a supporting cast of friends and family members worked hard and, frequently, without pay to secure and promote performances, scrape together the financial capital to record and release albums, open sites for distribution or hand deliver albums and merchandise to local *distro* (independently-owned fashion shops and album distribution outlets), and contact radio and television stations, magazines, and newspapers for media coverage. Their dedication to overcoming the difficulties of the local and national music markets demonstrated a high level of commitment to scene sustainability and development.

Scholarly Touchstones and Scope

This study is preceded by three publications that examine underground music and related expressive forms in Indonesia: Emma Baulch's *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali* (2007), Jeremy Wallach's *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres: Popular Music in Indonesia, 1997-2001* (2008), and Brent Luvaas's *DIY Style: Fashion, Music, and Global Digital Cultures* (2012). Baulch argues that the territorialization of local spaces and genres in 1990s Bali was a means to belong to an imagined "elsewhere"—which she argues, refers to Jakarta. Baulch examines reggae, metal, and "alternapunk" (Baulch's term) scenes as "political strategies" (2007, 2) to resist "dominant Balinese identity discourses" (ibid., 18). Urban youth musicians and fans "domesticated" such musics originating from afar and "territorialized" public spaces in order to define their own sense of Balineseness. She argues that in the 1990s, performing

and consuming underground music were important means by which many young Balinese actively marked their place in modernity broadly, and in Balinese society in particular. While Baulch acknowledges an aesthetic and social overlap between the three music groups, she does not indicate unifying values across the three scenes that would warrant calling them part of a larger underground or indie soundworld, as they were when this research commenced. Luvaas and Wallach have separately questioned Baulch's assumption of exclusivity and suggested that Baulch may have overlooked common ground between scenes because of her desire to emphasize the "tensions among these groups" (Luvaas 2009b, 182; Wallach 2009). Baulch also does not suggest any communication between underground scenes in Bali and urban centers in Java. According to research participants in the current study, at that early stage in Bali's underground history, such networks had not fully materialized. National indie networks were certainly present by the mid-2000s, and were of central importance to the capability of bands examined in this study to tour nationally and internationally.

Whether or not there was congruence between metal, reggae, and alternapunk scenes in the 1990s, the scope of our respective research projects in Bali—Baulch's and mine—is noticeably similar. We address the same geographical and "musical terrains" (Straw 1991), and in some cases, the same people—though more than ten years separate our individual field experiences. This study adopts significantly different "units of analysis" (Stone 2008), however, from Baulch's study, which has led me to reach very different conclusions regarding scene dynamics and values. Baulch's project is aligned with the Birmingham school approach to cultural studies. It privileges the researcher's theoretical analysis, defines young music producers as wholly subaltern, and leans

heavily on Hebdige's designation of a subculture (2003 [1979]). An authoritative theorization of scene dynamics supersedes research consultants' interpretations on music's meaning in their lives. Baulch's theoretical bent is reflected in much scholarship on popular music emerging from the subfields of cultural studies like literary, film/video, and digital studies. All of these fields share a historical relationship with literary criticism, and similar genealogies inform theoretical concerns and research methods: The focal point of such projects tends to be broad sociological phenomena such as nationalism, gender, or economic class that are used to explicate (and occasionally reify) power relations in society. Analysts' speculations for how these phenomena operate take precedence over on-the-ground explanations by the people who negotiate power inequities through them.

Power relations and cultural superstructures like nation, class, or religion concern many ethnomusicologists as well. The tendency to privilege a bird's eye assessment of expressive cultures, however, combined with the near-total dismissal of research participants' interpretations, grants the analyst an omniscient presence at odds with the phenomenological approach of the current study and troubling to researchers within the modern social sciences. Harris Berger, for example, finds fault with the unspecific research methods and vague analytical frameworks common in cultural studies that lack evidence for how researchers reached their conclusions about systemic processes or informant perspectives (1999:14-15). In concurrence with Berger, I am skeptical of studies that privilege the analysts' perspectives at the expense of those music producers or consumers whom they claim to seek to understand.¹²

¹² Examples include Frith (1996), Walser (1993), and Weinstein (1991).

Both Wallach and Baulch focus on matters of territory in music-making, but Wallach's scope is far-reaching: *Modern Noise* presents a broad spectrum of popular musics in Java and Bali (including underground music) and elucidates identity as framed by the nation-state and socio-economic class. The generic focus of Wallach's study is music that most Javanese and Balinese know well and often encounter through live performance, television and radio broadcasts, music videos, and commercially released audio recordings. Thus, where "popular music" refers to what is most *apparent* in the Indonesian soundscape, Wallach's study is about the most popular musics of Indonesia. His analysis is focused on the musics he believes most aptly unite Indonesians across classes and regions. While he does cover underground music, he claims that such music is too esoteric and xenocentric to serve Indonesians' collective imaginings.

Luvaas is more at ease with the legitimacy of DIY style as a meaningful form of expressive culture in Indonesia. Indie pop, however, is treated as a genre emphasizing "placelessness," rather than "westernness." It is a genre, among others, that allows young Indonesians to explore their globalized selves (2013). Luvaas, like Baulch and Wallach, tends toward a preoccupation that an *original* place is significant in determining the relationship between identity-building and genres of music. So-called indigenous musics, from *gamelan* to *keroncong*, reflect Indonesianness, or the place of the nation. Western-derived pop styles reflect a disavowal of place—a yearning for connections with an "elsewhere" (borrowed from Baulch 2007). Luvaas writes of an indie pop band originally from Bandung,

Mocca have stripped their sound and their image of overt ethnic signifiers. They experiment with a wide range of musical sources, but never those associated with their own backgrounds. They sing in English. Their lyrics stick principally to broad human themes unspecific to time and place. And in so doing, they defy easy

categorization for consumption by a niche audience of world music fans. They don't play up their ethnicity; they drop it altogether like a bad habit or an outdated trend. And why not? these young musicians assert. It's not like kids in Bandung grow up listening to *degung* anymore. These are children of a globalized world, raised on MTV and the Internet, and they insist on being taken seriously on the same terms as other international pop artists (Luvaas 2012, Loc. 3247).

Luvaas interprets Mocca's creative proclivities by arguing that "the 'local' of the nation-state often feels like a trap, a barrier between Indonesia and the rest of the world. Indonesian indie bands like Mocca find ethnic, regional, and national traditions untenable as resources for creative expression, as such traditions serve to further isolate them from global youth culture and bring them into line instead with nationalist projects toward which they often feel distrust and disconnection" (Luvaas 2009, 248). True, many artists have actively resisted nationalist or regionalist projects—those politically pursued particularly during the New Order and those commercially pursued through the mainstream music industry.

Mocca are not unique in their play with globally circulating indie aesthetics—nor is such a tendency new. In fact, Indonesian artists playing genres of rock n' roll have been doing so, without inserting ethnic signifiers into their music, since the 1950s (Putranto, interview, 2011). Furthermore, Luvaas's evaluation assumes a (conscious or unconscious) resistance to categories of belonging grounded in ethnicity or nationality. Indeed, one could read as much into Mocca's musical texts. This study has elucidated ambivalence toward such resistance discourses, however. In fact, my conversations with research participants never suggested that they possessed some hybrid subjectivity based on their national and global selves. Further, I would suggest an alternative reading of Mocca's music that suggests they were playing with the multiple signs and symbols to which they have access in one *single* place. In the Bandung context where they first made

music, metal, punk, or grunge were all equally valid parts of the local soundscape, just as are *degung* or *dangdut*. By analyzing Mocca's music as a deterritorialization of Indonesian music aesthetics or as an example of "dislocated nostalgia" (ibid., 2013)—nostalgia for "other people's memories," as suggested in an earlier publication (Luvaas 2009, 257)—Luvaas denies artists ownership over the musics they have carefully and meticulously sought out and studied in order to cultivate their personal styles.

Rather than force the issue of place into contrastive terms of either *local* or *global* spaces, I focus on how and why indie musicians in Bali suggest they were inspired by North American and UK bands and why they went to such great lengths to connect with artists who were not immediately, physically present in the "local" context of Bali. Attention to the diverse, sometimes divergent ways in which people assigned meaning to musical experience problematizes the assumption that music is always a means to align with some broader framework for belonging—class, religion, regionality, nationality, or globality, for example. Sometimes social identities are built around *musical* choices, and sometimes class, religion, and nationality are all taken for granted and unproblematic.

A primary contribution of this study is to tease apart reigning discourses on territorialization or transnationalism that limit understandings of artistic motivations for engaging globally circulating expressive cultures. My aim is to critique the apprehension underpinning earlier studies (and expressed by many of my colleagues) that would suggest Bali-based indie artists prove either the cultural imperialist or transnationalist thesis by engaging globally circulating musical styles, rather than so-called locally germinated types. Of course, such concerns are understandable, given the ever-present, economic power imbalances among nations and yield unequal cultural exchange. Cultural

imperialism within music production, recording, and dissemination leads many popular music markets worldwide to be dominated by musical forms originating in the United States and Europe. Culture industries, like the top three major music labels, serve to sustain the unidirectional flow of products and values (Taylor 1997). The same cultural politics and power structures that permeated cultural exchanges during de-colonization are carried into the global music market: popular music is dominated by western artists. The historically colonized remain marginalized, financially and otherwise, and their indigenous musical traditions are cheapened by imported ones (Manuel, *Grove*). Craig Lockard adopts the media studies term *media imperialism* to describe this process in music, whereby “the media flow is unidirectional, and where a small number of source countries account for a substantial share of all international media influences in the world” (1998, 43).

An uneven exchange of cultural products between industrialized and industrializing nations—Indonesia is generally relegated to the latter category—is, without question, a modern reality. As Martin Stokes writes, “Fundamental asymmetries and dependencies in musical exchange have deepened all too evidently. European and North American rock and pop superstars are prominent in charts, music stores, and cassette stands across much of the third world; the reverse is not true” (2004, 55). Indonesia is bombarded with western music products, particularly those originating from the United States, without so much as an outside chance of achieving an equal exchange that would allow the same number of Indonesian originals to reach the west. With the exception of recordings that fetishize the local and appeal to consumers’ taste for the

exotic—in other words, those recordings that sound “Indonesian” enough to be marketed as “world music,”—Indonesian artists rarely garner an American following.

While inequities are a modern reality, I argue in this study that western popular music’s hegemony is an ungrounded myth. This study will show that indie music genres have not replaced or devalued so-called “indigenous” music practices. Further, in concurrence with Ian Biddle and Vanessa Knights (2007) on cultural imperialism, and the fear that those cultures with the most capital inevitably dominate and gray out local ways of life, this study examines how an uneven distribution of resources is negotiated. Furthermore, it will highlight examples of how the increasing ease with which human beings can communicate and travel internationally has led to more equitable cultural relations, as musicians and fans are increasingly able to share their musics across regional and national borders. Lipsitz (1994), Frith (1996), Biddle and Knights (2007), and others similarly maintain that new patterns of cultural flows challenge cultural imperialism and empower the so-called marginalized to imagine their own modernity and find their voice in some global dialogue. This position, also popularized by music industries and music print and broadcast media, argues that the new global order allows for a new sense of *place*. A “global village” takes shape, hybridity becomes the norm, and music from anywhere else can share the stage. A romanticization of difference, as Erlmann calls it (1994), emerges, and the vision of an egalitarian music industry just on the horizon, where everyone can claim equal access to cultural capital and revel in one another’s diversity.

Richard Middleton outlines the two polarized scenarios resulting from forecasts on music’s fate in globalizing processes:

In the first case, the theory is usually ‘top-down,’ portraying the [infiltrated] group as undifferentiated dupes of commercial manipulation; this tends to accompany pessimistic scenarios of cultural decline. In the second case, the theory is ‘bottom-up,’ representing the group as the creative source of authentic (as opposed to ersatz) popular music; this tends to accompany populist scenarios of leftist opposition. The distinction is between production for the people and production by the people (2007).

These two opposing positions—one emphasizing commercial manipulation and uneven resource access and the other, resistance and cultural agency—are tempered by contextualized examinations of global cultural exchanges. Stokes writes, “critical caution has replaced the highly polarized theoretical positions and millennial anxieties that previously characterized the field” (see Stokes 2004). Though economic inequity continues, new market realities also undermine popular music hegemony. For example, album sales continue to drop as illegal file sharing and album piracy increase.¹³

Neither extreme—that of global pop domination or utopian equity in the music industry—accurately portrays the realities of modern music industry practice. The present study seeks to shift the focus back on the specific trajectories of globally circulating musics in order to illuminate a commonality: that seemingly disparate musicians from both sides of the proverbial pond stake a claim to musics encountered in their immediate, everyday experience—no matter the origins, era, style. Human beings everywhere access, evaluate, and assign meaning to expressive cultures as a means to stake a claim and make them their own—in other words, to make them like *home*.

This study demonstrates media for accessing music in Indonesia that will be familiar in the American context. During the early 1990s, musicians accessed music by American and European bands through mail order catalogues, fanzines, and cassette

¹³ One could argue, however, that their continued control over other entertainment media including television, radio, and print media, ensures that potential audiences continue to consume the musical styles, fashions, and visual images commercialized by the major labels.

sharing (Luvaas 2009, 251). Fans growing up in the United States in the early 1990s accessed the same artists by largely the same means. In fact, consumers in Asia, North America, Australia, and Europe all accessed the products of the international music industry via specific and similar media networks. I argue that this fact compounds the assumption that international recording artists like Rage Against the Machine, Green Day, or Nirvana (all artists immensely popular in Indonesia and in the United States during the 1990s) were, in fact, felt to be less *local* for Indonesian fans than for fans growing up the United States. The average fan in the United States was not more socially close to a North American recording artist than a fan in Indonesia.

My personal musical background corroborates this argument: I weathered my formidable pre-teen and teenage years in North Carolina in the early 1990s, when the West Coast's alternative rock, also called Seattle Sound or *grunge* rock in both US-based popular media and local underground scenes in Indonesia, was popular among my peers. Nirvana was one of my favorite bands at the time. I first heard their music on the radio and MTV, and I read band profiles and album reviews in *Spin* and *Rolling Stone Magazine*. My friends and I purchased albums by Nirvana and other Seattle bands or made cassette copies of the compact discs purchased by others. None of my friends or I was ever able to attend a Nirvana concert. Instead, we attended local "shows," gatherings of newly formed middle and high school bands and their friends in church basements and high school gyms, dressed uniformly in *flannels* (plaid printed lumberjack-style shirts), ripped baggy jeans, and Doc Martens or *Chucks* (Converse sneakers), to hear our musician friends play covers of our favorite grunge songs. Through our private, in-home listening experiences and these moments of face-to-face musical sharing at shows, we felt

ourselves to be socially close to Cobain as an icon for the grunge movement of Seattle, Washington. This music felt neither foreign nor far-removed from our immediate local, 2,300 miles from these artists' stomping grounds. Unknowingly, we accessed Nirvana's music through some of the very same channels—mediated recording, written review, and live covers—as the hundreds of thousands of Indonesians who counted Nirvana among their favorite bands during that same time period and who, I would later learn during this study, also felt no great aesthetic or social distance from the band born 8,500 miles from *their* stomping grounds.

Research focused on how individuals assign meaning to their musical encounters reveals that so-called foreign products may not always be treated as foreign or far-flung in the “new” context. Global mass media studies have led to a revision of understandings of the *local*, as Arjun Appadurai's study of the social life of commodities proves. Appadurai challenges a unidirectional model of cultural exchange, writing, “What these arguments fail to consider is that at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one or another way: this is true of music and housing styles as much as it is true of science and terrorism, spectacles and constitutions” (1996, 295). Globally circulating musics like Nirvana in the 1990s fit comfortably within Appadurai's model because they are, by the nature of their medium as recorded sound, often separated from their sources—from the places and producers from which they originally emerged. Today, as the capability of digital file download continues to reduce consumer desire to purchase a tangible product, many such musical objects are consumed without even any immediate physical reference to an original cultural context. *Place* is not irrelevant, however. As George Lipsitz suggests,

popular music recordings force us to contend with the significance of place, because through them we become aware of people from *other* places (Lipsitz 1994, 17). We know these recordings emerged from somewhere, and through these recordings we imagine others, who we may never encounter face-to-face, and who may dwell thousands of miles away in a place we can only “picture” through these sonic “snapshots.”

Media imperialism is not irrelevant in the Balinese context. In fact, the myth of market control informs local discourses about indie music. Indie values are a form of active resistance *against* such market hegemony. They are a direct response to the capitalist agenda to standardize products and increase profits. Research interlocutors were not so concerned with their bombardment by *western* products but, rather, by their bombardment with *mediocre* ones. It is not the original context that concerns most indie scene participants but, rather, the *content* of cultural expressions. Further, a central goal of this study is to, in Feld’s words, “...reimagine cosmopolitanism from the standpoint of the seriously uneven intersections, and the seriously off-the-radar lives of people who, whatever is to be said about their global connections, nonetheless live quite remotely to the theorists and settings that usually dominate cosmopolitanism conversations in academia” (Feld 2012, Loc. 92).

Baulch, Luvaas, and Wallach all treat the globally circulating popular musics from which Bali-based indie musicians draw inspiration to form their own personal and musical identities as “foreign repertoires” (Baulch 2007, 54). Wallach goes so far as to suggest underground artists are merely derivative, and have little to offer in the way of uniting Indonesia around a shared musical heritage. As Thomas Turino has indicated, however, “people are in the habit of thinking of ‘culture’ as coterminous with a particular

society or country” (2008, 117), and such a tendency is presented in many scholarly studies of popular music beyond the west. By continuing to focus on the origins for these cultural products, these works usurp authority from music producers to rightfully claim ownership over the music that matters to them.

This project is also distinguished from sociological studies on popular music that are grounded in Marxist interpretations of power market control and emphasize the commoditization of popular music. It is concerned, rather, with addressing reigning discourses on market control—on power differentials between the music industry and consumers, as well between the western and nonwestern world. Scholars favoring a Marxist view of the centrality of resource control in capitalist markets argue that the music industry manages *both* the qualities of the product *and* how it is consumed. In such conditions musical products will ultimately be standardized to maximize profit, and individuals are unable to shape the products of entertainment industries (Adorno [2002] 1941). In addition to reifying the significance of economic structures in shaping social relations, a Marxist concern over the monopolization of resources in the popular music industry renders an analysis of individual perspectives difficult (Stone 2008:207).

Sociologist Jürgen Habermas offers a corrective to the Marxist model by asserting that through rational communication, human beings are capable of shaping social reality, even at the political or economic level (1981). Similarly, popular music scholar Andy Bennett writes, “Consumers take the structures of meaning—the musical and extra-musical resources associated with particular genres of pop—and combine them with meanings of their own to produce distinctive variations in patterns of consumption and stylistic expression” (Bennett 2000, 46). Finally, Biddle and Knights challenge the assumption

that a close relationship between global corporate interests and nation-state power ultimately determines the shape and meaning of music for consumers (2007, 29).

This study will demonstrate that the practice of engaging with the products of entertainment industries results in widely varied interpretations of aesthetic products. It also argues that publications linking popular music to counter-hegemonic social and political movements (e.g. Frith 1981, Weinstein 1991) is not necessarily a corrective to the Marxist model, because they can reify the relationship between popular music and social resistance (e.g., Peddie 2006 and Baulch, 2007). It will show that rock or indie are not any more the preferred musics of subaltern groups than they are the imposed products of capitalist hegemony. It focuses on small group interactions in practice, and meaning-generation as process, to subvert both Marxist and cultural imperialist models and muddy the waters on critical thought that suggests culture, at any level, functions as a predictable system.

This study conveys indie music in Bali, neither as resistant to the local nor as extracted from a deterritorialized palette. Its practitioners are, rather, engaged in a vernacular cosmopolitanism, whereby their aesthetic influences may be global, but meaning they assign to their musical texts is definitively local. Thomas Turino's musical cosmopolitanism provides a useful reference point, though his assumption that cultural habits are always traced to geographic origins in collective imaginings betrays a materialist approach at odds with a processual conception of culture as developed through lived experience (2008).¹⁴ David Harnish, borrowing from Ulrich Beck (2006), defines

¹⁴ Turino's application of cosmopolitanism illustrates this problem. He writes, "A monolingual Spanish-speaking Mexican in Chicago may well learn to use cosmopolitan technologies like the Internet and e-mail...but if the majority of habits that determine his everyday thoughts, interactions, and practices are guided by models from his original home and from the immigrant community in Chicago, then much of

cosmopolitanism as a state of mind and being that “acknowledges pluralism, otherness, and human community” (2013, 190), and Steven Feld’s work on jazz cosmopolitanism in Accra, Ghana offers a more relevant model for “inquire[ing] into the substance of unanticipated global entanglements in contemporary musical life-worlds” (2012, Loc. 90). Thus, Bali’s indie scene participants are understood, not as disaffected youth seeking to shed their cultural shackles and “modernize” by engaging so-called “western” popular musics. They did not fit the Hebdigean notion of subculture—though they did maintain a style that is consciously antithetical to a vague “mainstream.” They were also not translocal in their imaginings. *Place*, as shared geographic, social, and musical terrain experienced face-to-face—remained significant. It marked the *home* environment of the island firstly, and the nation, secondly. Wallach alludes to this reality in his analysis of language choice in Indonesian underground music in the 1990s: Rather than seeking out some “abstract, English-speaking global music subculture” by releasing songs in English, these artists looked inward for “a national, Indonesian-speaking musical community composed of active local scenes distributed throughout the country” by releasing primarily Indonesian-language songs (2003, 53). This study reveals that language is not the only source of evidence for the continued salience of the local within the indie scene. It is also reflected, for example, in song lyrics commenting on locally relevant events and video clips highlighting Indonesian landscapes. Luvaas, too, documents the local pride movement within *distro*—music and fashion distribution outlets that increasingly and

what he does may be best understood in relation to the dynamics of the Mexican (American) immigrant-community formation” (2008, 120). Turino has effectively robbed the subject of the authority to define culture according to habits and technologies relevant to her. As a daily e-mail user, she may well consider the Internet and e-mail to be critical technologies to which she feels socially close—perhaps more so than other “habits” Turino believes to be indigenous to her Mexican or immigrant heritage. This study asks the reader to shelve the assumption that cosmopolitan technologies—and expressive cultures—are necessarily experienced as translocal and not socially familiar. In the hands of the user, such technologies may be central to her daily practices, and therefore her cultural identity.

proudly sell only local brands (2012, Loc. 1582). Thus, even if style, language or lyric, do not overtly symbolize Indonesianness, one's *place* within the nation provides a critical frame for social and aesthetic reference.

When any musical object—an instrument, musical form, recorded song, etc.—travels from one location to the next, the object inevitably undergoes a process of reconstitution—not only in terms of stylistic form, but also in terms of its meaning. While it may retain the residue of its original cultural context, it will only be meaningful in this new one if those who receive it choose to make sense of it. Perhaps the object will be refashioned or will inspire new objects. Perhaps it will remain unaltered in shape or style and simply become absorbed into the new environment. What is certain is that it will mean something different.

I offer as a final case example of this phenomenon the many formalized grunge communities (*komunitas grunge*) in metropolitan centers of Java, which remained as late as 2014. These communities were composed of fans and bands dedicated to preserving the aesthetics of this 1990s underground music movement originating in the United States, paying homage to its founders through tribute shows and active discussion about the period's most pivotal historical moments, and supporting local artists who drew on the aesthetics of the genre to create their own music. Music that was abandoned long ago by its very founders as commercialized pastiche in the United States, continued to resonate for young grunge fans and musicians in Indonesia. The music impacted local practitioners' musical tastes, social alliances, and even daily activities. To interpret Indonesian grunge communities as xenocentric or uncreative would be to miss something completely what grunge music meant to *anak grunge* (grunge kids).

This project focuses on individuals' engagement with and meanings assigned to the local trajectories for globally circulating musics. It renders illogical the presumption that rock, metal, punk, folk, and other indie genres are western imports and *gamelan*, *dangdut*, *keroncong*, etc. are local products. To question musical ownership—either by usurping it from practitioners by conflating origins with authenticity or by ignoring its importance by assuming sounds have no roots—glosses over individual interpretations that have nothing to do with the logics of cultural imperialism *or* global hybridities. By examining grounded exchange practices, this study privileges personal affinity to define what constitutes local. Answering Berger's call for a stance-oriented approach to the study of expressive cultures, it seeks "to specify the objects to which meanings are ascribed, make clear the role of agency in performance, illuminate the interpretive variability between actors in or across production processes, and show how all of this plays out in their lived experiences; such lived meanings are the reality from which generalizations about cultural styles, approaches, or sensibilities are abstracted" (Berger 2009, 24). Grounded in the theoretical position of sociological phenomenology, this study avoids an objectification of practices as symbolic and practitioners as carrying out roles.

While Finnegan's commitment to studying "what people actually do on the ground" (ibid, 7), influenced the study's scope, my theoretical underpinning was inspired by graduate seminars on phenomenology at Indiana University, led by Ruth Stone. Harris Berger's work on stance, as a way to understand the "the affective, stylistic, or valual quality with which a person engages with an element of her experience" (2009, Loc. 184), adds intentionality to this study on "musical ways of being-in-the-world,"(Titon

2008, Loc. 646).¹⁵ Martin Heidegger's conception of the individual and the world as mutually constitutive suggests that music is not a reflective, but a transformative communicative act (1962), and the concept of stance additionally helps to elucidate how individuals build their identities in relation to other individuals acting together through (in this study) music-related practices. The current study privileges the meanings assigned to music by the people who make it. It applies Berger's notion of stance to foreground practitioners' relationships with music, rather than the political symbolism of their musical affinities. Berger notes that a listener "always has a relationship to that music. She grapples with its sound and constitutes it in experience, and the valual and affective quality of her grappling—that is, her stance—plays a key role in the overall experience of the meaning of the music for her" (2009, 15); this statement could apply equally to a music producer or any other participant in expressive culture. In my research, practitioners were not passive recipients of the musics that influence their own expressive choices; rather, they exhibited an "intentionality" in their foregrounding of this music over others and, further, a stance on the "affective, stylistic, or valual quality of that engagement" (ibid., 21).

The Matter of "Popular Music"

Given that within the discipline of ethnomusicology, this study will likely be consigned to the increasingly popular category of a popular music study, a brief examination of the term popular music is warranted. Middleton outlines the historical

¹⁵ While Jeff Todd Titon asserts that his concept for a musical way of being-in-the-world is a phenomenological one, he does not directly refer to Heidegger's Dasein and the "*unitary* phenomenon" of the individual's relationship with—and within—the world (2013 [1927], Loc. 1979).

tendency in the west to distinguish *popular* music from *art* music, as any type of music associated with an uneducated public rather than a specially trained elite. Popular music also often refers to styles of recorded and commercially released music originating in the US or UK (but also Latin America and the Afro-Caribbean). This has led to the association of guitar-centered genres—rock, rhythm and blues, country, reggae, etc.—with the category of popular music. The multidisciplinary International Association for the Study of Popular Music, though providing no specific definition for its object of inquiry, writes that its mission is to “advance an understanding of popular music and the processes involved in its production and consumption” (*IASPM* online).

The term “popular music” creates an unfortunate binary: What is *not* popular music—historically in folklore, musicology, and ethnomusicology—has been called *folk*, *art*, or *traditional* music. In addition to their slippery ambiguity, these categories also reflect taxonomical ideologies developed in the music-related disciplines of the west—ideologies that may or may not have relevance in other contexts. In the Indonesian vernacular, for example, “popular” has two translations: *rakyat* or *populer*. Bart Barendregt and Wim van Zanten suggest that both terms generally refer to artists working with the national music recording industry (2002:68), and that popular music is any music that is recorded and made commercially available could be considered a popular music. For promotion, marketing, and distribution purposes, popular musics are further subdivided as either *nasional* (national) or *daerah* (regional). National genres refer to an odd variety of styles ranging from *dangdut* and *keroncong* to jazz and rock, united by their assumed popularity in urban regions and inclusion of lyrics in the national language. Regional genres refer to any style of music generally marketed toward particular

provinces, regions, or ethnic groups that often (though not always) feature regional instruments or lyrics in a regional language (ibid.). The motivation for classifying musics in this way is primarily market-driven: musics believed to be nationally sellable will be marketed and distributed as such, as will regional musics. Thus, *pop Sunda* (Sundanese pop) would not be promoted or distributed in Bali because there is assumed to be no market of consumers for this West Javanese music in the Balinese context.

Zooming in on the research site, “popular music” takes on an entirely different—and negative—connotation: When I first began interviewing performing artists, I introduced myself as a researcher from the United States who is interested in *musik populer* (popular music) in Bali. Each interviewee asked for clarification about what, exactly, I meant by “popular music,” and no small number exhibited disdain for my use of the term *musik populer* to describe what they did. Music writer and former manager of bands Navicula and Superman is Dead Rudolf Dethu, for example, responded, “I’m not that into popular music” (interview, 2009).¹⁶ It would take months for me to tease out exactly what was so wrong with the term “popular.” I would eventually come to realize that resistance to this label revealed a fundamental concern of nearly every musician to be distinguished from music that is *pop* (pop), *lagi trendi* (trendy), or *biasa-biasa* (ordinary). To call a musician “popular” was not only an inaccurate application of an English-language derived signifier; it was also potentially insulting. Thus, in this research context, “popular music” did not prove to be a constructive designation for the musics examined. In Bali’s indie scene, thus, “popular” is associated with the antithetical mainstream *pop* and with the aesthetics and business practices of the national recording industry.

¹⁶ “Aku tidak begitu senang dengerin musik populer.”

Unlike Wallach's *Modern Noise* or Andrew Weintraub's study on dangdut (2013), this study examines musical styles that were, in fact, not ubiquitous in this particular Indonesian context—nor were the artists widely known nationally. If popular music is generally accepted to refer to any music that is widely available and easily accessible, then indie music in Bali is not popular. Excepting SID, psychobilly act Suicidal Sinatra, or melodic punk band Scared of Bums—bands that enjoyed a large following in Bali—most indie artists were unknown by the majority of Bali's residents. Bands like Navicula and Nymphaea, who consistently struggled to attract a fanbase in their immediate surroundings, enjoyed a much larger following in neighboring Java and Jakarta. Unpopularity was not problematic for most musicians, however. In fact, many coveted aesthetic traits they considered to be marginal or even esoteric. Thus, indie music producers, as self-conscious cosmopolitans, often exhibited pride for their own musical elitism, and this study makes no attempt at a broad examination of audience reception—though it will occasionally attempt to compare diverse, sometimes divergent soundworlds present in Bali, where it helps to contextualize the indie scene. Rather, it focuses on a small group of like-minded music producers and other professionals who, despite their marginality, were intensely dedicated to their craft.

One final caveat with regards to the study's scope involves the matter of musical sound: John Blacking suggests two alternative ethnomusicological project types: those which focus on the extra-musical components of music-making and those which conduct formal musical analysis. He writes, "Extra-musical analyses emphasize the role of music and musicians in social life. Formal analyses of music examine the patterns of sound either in the immediate context of a known musical tradition or according to the

frequency of certain patterns of rhythm, melody, or tonality which appear to be found in the musical systems of many different cultures” (1995, 32). Many ethnomusicologists choose to engage a combination of the two. Formal analysis becomes a means of visualizing the role of music in social life. This study does not engage a formal analysis of musical sound—not because the sounds are unimportant to research participants, but because the patterns of sound alone do not provide a means to distinguish how indie musicians value music, in comparison with artists on other musical pathways. It highlights, rather, what scene members have to say *about* their understandings of, or classifications for musical sound. The theoretical framework leaves the job of interpreting sound up to research interlocutors and the work of making sense of the broader socio-musical world, built up through the micro details of shared meaning, up to the interpreters. The analytical lens is zoomed out to the level of *values* concerning musical forms that have been reflexively developed through social interaction.¹⁷ Aligned with Berger, this study places emphasis, not on the texts of music, but rather on the lived experience of the texts of music (See Berger 2009).

Research Methods and the Researcher's Belonging

My research methods reflect my own professional background as an ethnomusicologist trained within a paradigm for social science research that acknowledges observations of practice and individual interpretations of experience as critical sources for understanding music's meaning in people's lives. I focus on how

¹⁷ In this way, the study differs from Berger's application of a Merleau-Pontian phenomenology to metal and jazz, whereby the author zooms into the level of patterns of sound in order to understand research participants' perception of such patterns and the meanings they assign them (1999).

facilitators for scene sustainability individually and collectively craft musico-social values or, in simpler terms, decide together what matters enough to make the indie scene happen—and continue to happen. Primary research consultants included many of the same key players common in other professional music industries that include components of live stage performance (often for profit) and recording and album production. Musicians, band managers, sponsors, music journalists, publicists, recording producers, sound engineers, roadies, and venue owners were the primary consultants within the research and, later, my primary colleagues as a public programs professional. Such individuals interacted frequently with one another through the common practices of rehearsal, performance, song recording, album production, promotional activities, tours, and hanging out. The meeting places for their practices were the core research sites, and the emergent subjectivities established provided the analytical framework for determining the scene's meaning in their lives.

The study engages ethnographic methods well known in ethnomusicology, anthropology, and related disciplines for the collection of qualitative data—primarily a fluctuation between deep *participation* in scene activities and removed *observation* and documentation. I introduced myself as an American music researcher seeking to understand why participants play certain styles of music and what those musics mean to them, as well as how social relationships help to cultivate a healthy music scene. In addition to performances, I observed rehearsals at home-based and rental studios and recording sessions at production houses located in Bali and Jakarta. I accompanied two bands, Navicula and Dialog Dini Hari, for a total of six tours to neighboring Java. I joined Navicula on a tour throughout Kalimantan as part of Greenpeace Indonesia's

environmental action campaign to document deforestation. During tours, I often assisted with event and band promotion through social media marketing, by writing press releases, and by publishing articles on these bands in national entertainment magazines.

While my Fulbright grant supported only the first year of research (October 2008 – August 2009), I continued to live in Indonesia for more than six consecutive years. During this time I worked professionally as a public programs producer and manager, organizing concerts, festivals, and workshops that often featured the same musicians with whom I had worked, and I continued to frequently position myself, physically and intellectually, within the music practices I wished to understand. During the hundreds of performances I attended, I sometimes assumed the slightly removed stance of researcher—taking photographs, audio, or video recordings—or casual observer on the outskirts of the audience space. I occasionally moved into a more central position within the primary audience space and closer to the stage, thus relinquished my positioning as observer in order to join in the joy of the “vivid presence” (Schutz 1951) with fellow audience members. I often cast myself in the supportive role of helping bands backstage by hauling equipment, getting meals, or preparing for media interviews, and as a music professional, I often worked alongside research interlocutors to stage the very performance events I hoped to more deeply understand. Occasionally I took part in the creative process by contributing English language lyrics or offering dialect or vocal coaching to singers, based on my formal musical training. The only role within performance that I rejected was as an onstage performer. My background as a classically trained singer and pianist did not harmonize with the styles of music I researched, nor did I detect any analytical benefit to joining in these creative practices. I also experienced

some discomfort over the idea of occupying this space, both as a newcomer and a woman within a hyper-masculine music scene—a challenge with which I continue to struggle.

In concurrence with Wallach, I attended to the “circulation of cultural objects” (2008:27) within the music scene, including hard copy albums and event and tour posters largely circulated on social media.¹⁸ Audio and video recordings and photographic documentation were imperative points of reference over the six years of research and as I shifted my focus toward dissertation writing. They not only served the valuable function of reminding me of the sights and sounds of particular scenic moments that could not be sufficiently captured within the field journal, but they were also the objects of new observations: Where my own novelty of experience, distraction with recording technology, and stumbling over a second language did not permit undivided attention to all components of a music event within the swift passage of clock time, recordings encoded additional valuable information that could be reviewed repeatedly. Photographs, in particular, were useful in helping me to identify recurring performance tropes in stage performance and markers of performance success, demonstrated through audience exuberance displayed in smiles, shouts, clapping, and dance.¹⁹ Throughout my time in Indonesia, I spent hundreds of hours “hanging out” (*nongkrong*) with scene participants. For every moment of focused music-making there I could count hours moments when music-making was not the primary focus of our attention.

In addition to participant-observation, I conducted more than forty formal interviews with a cross-section of scene members. Through feedback interviews, I

¹⁸ See “Albums and Gigs” in the research blog for a selection of album covers and event and tour posters (<http://baliunderground.com/albums-and-gigs/>).

¹⁹ See the research blog’s sidebar for a gallery of photographs taken during the research period (<http://baliunderground.com>).

additionally reviewed together with scene participants a selection of video, audio, and photographic documentation of scene activities (Stone and Stone 1981). The purpose of these interviews differed from my observations of and participation in scene activities. In these partitioned moments of reflexive theorizing, I sought to understand how research participants interpreted their music-related practices. By asking participants to reflect, I hoped they could foreground their musical memories, creative processes, stylistic affinities, future goals and even, in some cases, acknowledge and question taken for granted values.

My understanding of scene preoccupations and subjectivities—and an important contributor to the rapport I achieved with research consultants—included interactions on the Internet, primarily through social networking sites Facebook and Twitter.

Observations of Internet activities also contributed to my understanding of scene values and practices, and on- and offline interactions were mutually informative. Furthermore, online interactions contextualized my primary research site in Bali alongside indie scenes in Jakarta and Indonesia's other major urban centers by illuminating relationships between indie music insiders across the archipelago. Thus, I could conceptualize these scenes as the network they collectively form, using the online networks they collectively utilize.

Most critical to my partial sharing in indie scenes practices and values was my acceptance by scene participants, not as an American researcher, but as a music writer, fan, and eventually, close friend and colleague. Shortly after commencing research—and really, from the first time I listened to one of those cassettes Pasek offered me in Kerambitan—I realized that I shared much in common with my interlocutors. I assigned

many of the same meanings to social and musical gestures within the scene because I shared many *musical* experiences in common with them. Common musical references allowed us to communicate with relative ease. Despite the thousands of miles separating our hometowns, we *connected* with the same musicians and bands—Jimi Hendrix, Rage Against the Machine, Nirvana, and many others—that we had similarly accessed through recorded sound and photographic and video image. These same musicians shaped our social upbringings and provided us with common footing for dialogue. Our musical memories were partially shared, and this enabled us to take similar stances (à la Berger) toward particular expressive cultures.

Over six years in Indonesia, my field site evolved into home. Any residual analytical distance I created while defining myself as a “researcher” and others as “researched” slowly dissolved. Intimacy was not defined only by music-related practices, but also by the intertwining of my professional and private life with others. Between 2010 and 2013 I shared a home with Navicula frontman Robi and Lakota, his wife and the band’s former manager. As my research activities slid into a formal vocation in public programs, I often worked alongside many former research consultants to stage music workshops, concerts, and multi-day festivals. As an exercise in collaborative professionalism, this study makes a case for the ethical obligation of the ethnographer to consider her role vis-à-vis her research collaborators and how she may apply the theories and methods of her field toward pragmatic ends within the community she works. It also advocates for the ethnomusicologist’s role within the public sector: In part, due to financial crises impacting American universities and diminishing the number of academic appointments, public sector work is an increasingly relevant and necessary field. It also

carries the potential to increase the utility, relevance, and reach of our theoretical pursuits. As George Lipsitz argues, “The profession’s commitments to multilingualism, reciprocity, participation, performance, cosmopolitanism, and critical thinking are extraordinarily important tools for demystifying hierarchies today...” (2011, 197). In addition to illuminating how collective ambitions have empowered Balinese musicians to pursue creative and professional trajectories beyond their island’s shores, this study advocates for professional ambitions within ethnomusicology that pursue its utility beyond the Ivory Tower.

Theoretical Framework

The theories that inform my approach were not scaffolding on which I hung various data culled from the ethnographic record. Rather, they informed how I moved through lived experiences, alongside research interlocutors. They guided what questions I asked, how I guided recorded interviews, to what I directed my attention during performances, and ultimately, what kinds of relationships I wanted to have with research consultants in the long-term.²⁰ In order make sense of the indie scene, I employed theories that focus on the social constitution of experience drawn from sociological phenomenology (Schutz 1964[1951] and Berger and Luckmann 1966) and Herbert Blumer’s symbolic interactionism (1993 [1969]). These theories are grounded in Max Weber’s social action, which assumes that human beings act in response to the action and anticipated action of their fellow human beings (Weber 1994). “Sociology of

²⁰ As Berger notes, “The theoretical writings that we read shape our empirical research, framing our assumptions, placing data into contexts, and informing our interpretations” (2009, 26).

knowledge,” a phrase coined by German intellectual and philosopher Max Scheler in the 1920s, is concerned with the social foundation for meaning (1967, 5). By examining the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 15), a sociology of knowledge seeks to answer, “How is it possible that subjective meanings *become* objective facticities?” (ibid, 18). In other words, how does meaning come to be shared and taken for granted?

A combination of these theories suggests that meaning is not inherent in an object, idea, actor, or institution, but arises out of social interaction. Individuals are pragmatic actors who deal with the things they encounter in daily life through communication with fellow actors. Individuals actively interpret their social worlds rather than passively conform to overarching social structures (Blumer 1993). This theoretical framework opposes a structuralist or functionalist analysis which would identify social “constructs” directing behavior rather than examine dynamic ideals resulting from an ongoing cooperative effort to interpret shared experiences. The theoretical framework also suggests a departure from broad sociological models for cultural constructs that tend to underestimate the importance of individual actions and interactions. Meaning does not exist before or beyond the communicative act (ibid.).

Indie scene activities are analyzed as examples of joint action (Berger and Luckmann 1966) to which participants assigned meaning and from which they elucidated thematic preoccupations. Particular moments that engendered a deep sense of sharedness and belonging are elucidated through Alfred Schutz’s work on music and time: In addition to paramount, or everyday reality, Schutz argues that people recognize “multiple realities or realms of experience” from which they distinguish “finite provinces of

meaning” (Stone 2008, 166). Such finite provinces, including moments within live performance, studio recording, music activism, and others explored here constitute experiences distinguishable from the ordinary proceedings of everyday life. All habitual, music-related activities within the indie scene are special kinds of social interaction, distinguishable in their goal to draw attention to music. Finite provinces, however, are moments “by which the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ are experienced by both participants as a ‘We’ in vivid presence.” (Schutz 1964, 161). The intersubjectivity of music-making, in concurrence with Daniel Reed’s usage of the term, describes “a reality which consists neither of a singular notion of transcendent objective truth nor of subjective viewpoint of isolated individuals; rather, meaning is formed in human interaction—in the interaction of subjectivities...” (2003, 9). Meaning arises out of social interaction between individuals, and through this interaction, individuals determine who they are and with whom they want to relate.

Road Trip to Negara, 26 February 2009

I was buzzing with nerves the morning that Igo Blado—music producer, lyricist, event promoter, and guitarist for rock band Ed Eddy & Residivis (RSDVS)—pulled up in front of my kos (boarding room) in his red Volkswagen bus. The vehicle was decaled with the poster design for Bali Jam Fest, an event Igo helped to orchestrate and that featured nearly every band that would become central to my research, including RSDVS. Igo warmly greeted me as I climbed into the front seat. We would pick up everyone else at Eddy’s house in Sanur, he explained. He hoped we would hit the road to Negara in far west Bali before

noon. Our final destination was Gedung Olah Raga (GOR) Negara, a giant sports complex featuring a stadium that could seat thousands and that, by 10:00 tonight, would be filled to near capacity with young fans eagerly awaiting the headliners, *Superman Is Dead*. This would be my first road trip with a local band.

On the way to Eddy's house, Igo and I chatted about my research, his songwriting, and the other bands that would perform tonight. I tried to listen carefully, but I was distracted. I kept thinking, "This is it. This is your 'in.' If you screw up this trip, there is no way you'll finish this research on time. You've already lost two months waiting for research clearance and recovering from kidney stones. Blow it today and you might as well pack your bags. So please, please don't say anything stupid!" My critical inner voice was getting the better of me. And I was worried about other things; about operating my father's borrowed film camera for the first time, getting carsick on the windy roads to the west, not bringing a change of clothes in this sweltering heat...and not being "cool" enough to hang with a well-known rock band and its entourage. It would take me the better part of the year to figure out how to relax and enjoy the ride.

A few minutes later, I met Eddy in person for the first time at the home he shared with his Australian wife and young daughter, before he relocated to Australia for work in early 2010. He was a sight—shirtless, head shaved to the skin, and a disarming smile I recalled from his charismatic performance at Bali Jam Fest. He greeted me in English and would continue to chat with me

throughout the day in my native tongue, a habit he told me he couldn't break because he'd never grown accustomed to blondes who could speak Indonesian.

Eddy wasn't alone. A team of roadies and musicians who would join us were chatting loudly in a small entertainment room near his swimming pool. Among them were several who would become my close friends and research consultants: Mita, a Jakarta native who worked in Bali promoting bands and facilitating music events and who would become the manager of blues/folk band Dialog Dini Hari in a few short months. Fitra, a woman from Bandung and future lead singer of the melodic goth metal band Two Ice Queen. Clea, a Norwegian who came to know these artists and their friends through her rocker ex-husband and who was planning an anthropological research project for her masters on Javanese living in Bali. And Dadang, the guitarist for psychedelic grunge band Navicula and founder and frontman for Dialog Dini Hari.

We left the house only about two hours late—not bad for jam karet (rubber time, Indonesian for a flexible sense of “on time”). It would take hours to make the trip of only 110 kilometers. We would stop in Denpasar so that Eddy could pray at a masjid, and later in west Tabanan, where he would pray at a Hindu roadside temple. “He is covering all his bases,” I thought, not knowing if his interreligious mini-pilgrimage was due to his multicultural heritage or eccentric demeanor. We would eat lunch together about two hours from Negara and stop for several smoke breaks before finally arriving in Negara in the late afternoon. Event organizers provided several rooms at a local hotel in which we

could rest, shower, change clothes, and have dinner, and it would be after 9:00 before we would finally head to GOR Negara for the show.

Once inside the stadium, we set up camp high in the risers behind the stage. The entourage helped to carry in a crash cymbal and stand, guitars and effects boxes, cameras, stage clothes, and a cooler full of Bintang beer. Igo gave me a crew pass, which allowed me to pass through the barricade in the front of the stage in order to take close-up photographs. It would be my first of dozens. This coveted pass allowed me to divide my time, segregated from the primary audience and closer to the artists in the media area and VIP area, within the main audience area, where I could take wide angle and crowd shots and take in the fandom; and at “home base” behind the stage, chatting casually with our group.

*At one point, I accompanied Dadang to the greenroom to meet the members of Superman Is Dead when they arrived. I was jittering—now not with nerves, but with the nearly overwhelming excitement of the feeling that I had, indeed, made it “in.” My mind wandered to the film *Almost Famous*, a romance of a rock band on tour in the 1970s. I fancied myself one-part the lead character of the film, an awkward teenaged journalist stumbling my way through unfamiliar social territory, and one-part an amalgamation of the only female characters, the Band-Aids, and the fictional band’s über-cool road crew. SID would indulge me no social distance, however. They warmly greeted me, in English, and marveled at this strange field I called ‘ethnomusicology.’ We*

rushed back to the front after sharing one beer with SID and their crew in order for Dadang to take the stage for me to catch RSDVS's performance.

The crowd adored RSDVS. A veteran of the reggae bar circuit in Bali, Eddy was a true professional. His captivating stage persona and astonishing vocal prowess are normally backed by one of the most technically gifted rock guitarists in Indonesia, Chalie Said. Chalie couldn't make the out-of-town gig, so Dadang stepped in as a guest artist. The audience, composed almost exclusively of teenaged and twenty-something young men from Bali's westernmost province, went wild—shouting, dancing, singing along to the group's most popular songs, and erupting in collective abandon when the group covered a national favorite by dissident folk rocker Iwan Fals, "Bento."

SID would take the stage after midnight, but Eddy's entourage would have to hit the road and head back to Denpasar immediately after RSDVS played. I slept in the van nearly the entire way home, lulled to sleep by the sounds of new friends chatting and laughing in the seats around me. At close to 4:00 in the morning, Igo pulled up to the gates of my kos. I sleepily stumbled out of the van, cameras in tow, and thanked Igo for the invite, the ride, everything. I slept until noon the next day.

Throughout the study, I include vignettes constructed from field notes, interviews, photographs, and video documentation as a strategy to recreate the "feel" of particular research moments through deep description and the personal tone of first person narration. These deliberately impressionistic stories are not self-indulgent "asides"

(Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995), but should be treated as rich, qualitative resources for a deeper understanding of the scene and the benefits of a practice-centered approach to ethnography. Many of the vignettes also expose my subject position in the field, a presentational strategy in line with a general trend to question analytical objectivity in the social sciences. In his 1978 essay, “Towards a Reassessment of the Ethnomusicologist’s Role in Research,” Kenneth Gourlay opposes the omniscient or invisible ethnomusicologist, exemplified by the absent analyst in Alan Merriam’s tripartite model for ethnomusicological research (1964). In the field, I was an active part of the social interaction, and I brought all of my own emotional and professional baggage in tow. The impressions I garnered from field experiences—from the process of becoming familiar with research interlocutors and of ultimately becoming friends—directly informed my final interpretation. The vignettes are neither an “excerpt strategy” (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995)²¹ nor conclusive analysis, but rather a bridge between the “raw” field data—the note, the recording, or the photograph—and the carefully theorized and (perhaps at times, overly) authoritative tone of the removed analyst. All experiences, dialectical or otherwise, once committed to text, are removed from the immediate interaction and impossibly inferior to the experience of mutual tuning-in (Schutz 1964). The vignettes, however, serve as a constant reminder that the focus of this research is on real people interacting. Gourlay writes that a dialectical approach to research (1978:23), in which our understandings are reached through conversation and we abandon the notion of objectivity to make room for ambiguity, more accurately captures human social relations.

²¹ Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw call any means for presenting a segment of fieldnotes in the final analysis, either extracted directly from the original source or edited for content, an “excerpt strategy” (1995:180).

Participant Practices

This study concerned the practices through which a music scene materialized. A *scene* may be understood according to a number of theoretical tropes. It could, for example, compare to Blacking's sound group, "a group of people who share a common musical language, together with common ideas about music and its uses" (Blacking 1995, 232). Will Straw alternatively suggests "musical terrain" (1991), a term that bears close resemblance to Pierre Bourdieu's "field" as a setting for social interaction operating according to its own "logic" (1984). All of these names are more suitable than "community," a term that suggests a stability and homogeneity at odds with the collective of individuals at hand.²²

In choosing to call this particular group of musically focused individuals a *scene*, I use a term employed by research consultants (pronounced *sken* or *seen*). Though sometimes they used the term *komunitas* (community) to emphasize collective solidarity and shared ethics, scene participants usually acknowledged an undulation to all aspects of the scene—to the popularity of bands, genres, venues, and *tempat nongkrong* (places to hang out), and to the intensity with which individuals engaged in scene ideals—that "scene" seems more capable of accommodating. In other words, they acknowledged and accepted their own varying degrees of individual engagement and rather vagarious disposition as a group, without undermining the importance of collective valuation on

²² As Straw explains, "...a musical scene [is] distinct, in significant ways, from older notions of a musical community. The latter presumes a population group whose composition is relatively stable—according to a wide range of sociological variables—and whose involvement in music takes the form of an ongoing exploration of one or more musical idioms said to be rooted within a geographically specific historical heritage. A musical scene, in contrast, is that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization" (1991:373).

aesthetics and broader social and environmental issues that remained preoccupations and served to create the sense of “continuity” to which Holly Kruse refers in her examination of 1990s alternative music scenes in the United States (1993). A sense of continuity and shared evaluative criteria was exactly what rendered more than ephemeral participants’ interest in the scene’s vitality.

Bali’s indie scene was formed through habitual practices. Practice, here, refers not to the notion of a music rehearsal, but rather takes on the definition within practice theory as an activity that is actively achieved by individual agents and shaped by a larger social context (Berger 2009, 14). Indie scene practices included rehearsals (in Indonesian, *latihan*), gigs or live performance (*gig, panggung*—stage—or *pentas*), recording sessions (*sesi rekaman*), album production (*produksi album*), promotional activities (*promo*), tours (*tur*), and hanging out (*nongkrong*). All of these activities, including the socially embedded tradition of *nongkrong*, will be familiar to most who have worked with performing and recording artists, though many aspects of these practices—as well as their valuation in practice—are scene-specific. Band rehearsals took place in home-based studios owned by scene participants or at rehearsal studios available for rent. During rehearsals, bands met to prepare for a concert, recording session, or tour; wrote new songs; discussed upcoming events; and addressed general logistics, such as scheduling issues and budget. Performance opportunities within Bali ranged from large-scale music festivals to university events; special community outdoor gatherings like a motorcycle rally, neighborhood bazaar, or benefit concert for a social or environmental cause; paid performances for large music venues such as Hard Rock Café; unpaid gigs at smaller clubs owned by scene members; store openings at shopping centers; political rallies and

fundraisers; and special events at favorite indie hangouts, including family compounds and *distro*. Song recording and album production took place on-island or in Jakarta and usually preoccupied a band and a production house's staff for weeks to months, as they reflexively engaged with the material product of their musical work to a degree unmatched through other habitual activities (Wallach 2008, 117).²³ Promotional activities for a new album included local performances and tours, as well as the design and distribution of band merchandise, print and broadcast media interviews, and a range of self-promotion activities on the Internet.

A final indie scene activity intersecting all others was *nongkrong*, hanging out. As Wallach writes, "this ethic of sociality exerts a strong influence on the ways in which global and Indonesian national music genres are used and interpreted by Indonesian youth" (2008, 20). Together at coffee shops (*warung kopi*), music and fashion stores (*distro*), the beach, friends' houses, or studios, scene members smoked, joked, absent-mindedly strummed guitars, and talked about music. *Nongkrong* may have been the activity least focused on music production, but it was critically important for mutual reflection about music aesthetics and scene ideals. *Nongkrong* was also not limited to face-to-face interaction; music producers and fans have adapted this scene practice to modern communications technology, particularly social media. On their smart phones and laptops, at work or hanging out at cafes with Wi-Fi, scene members engaged one another via a variety of digital channels—in 2008, primarily Yahoo Instant Messenger, Facebook's chat feature, and Twitter, and by the end of 2014, Twitter, Path, and Line.

²³ In his chapter on multi-track studio practices, Wallach writes, "Studio-based sound-engineering practices tend to facilitate a certain level of reflexivity. The nature of the recording process lends itself to a particular kind of critical engagement with the work that is taking shape through it, which encourages thoughts about the music's origins, meanings, and potential audiences" (2009:117).

These social media interactions were important modes of “hanging out,” and, thus, important for the formation of scene ideals.

Scene Subjectivities

Ethnomusicologists generally agree that music performance can strengthen social bonds by communicating shared values. Subjectivities are the ways in which individuals frame their perspectives, beliefs, desires, and ultimately build their social alliances. Nationality, religion, race, gender, and class are all potential subjective frameworks. Subjectivities are shaped and shared through music performance. In phenomenological terms, they develop out of *institutionalized, taken-for-granted knowledge* about music (Blumer 1993, 17) that contextualizes joint activities among scene participants.

This project suggests that, under the right circumstances, people may form social alliances based on shared values concerning *music*, over all other subjective frameworks. Between 2008 and 2014, the indie scene was characterized by demographic heterogeneity: Centered within the largely urban Badung regency, it included the relatively affluent and poor; university-educated graduates and high school dropouts; Javanese, Balinese, Sumatrans, and expats; Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Agnostics, and Atheists. Women, who were largely excluded from active participation in many types of music-making in Indonesia, also became indie performers or, more commonly, took on crucial supportive roles as managers, publicists, and members of support teams. Principally, notions about *music*, rather than class, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, or some other frame for social solidarity, drew the boundaries of the indie scene.

The indie scene was composed of individuals who defined themselves and their alliances through their identification with the very scene they developed together. Indie subjectivities were shaped by several shared (although flexible and frequently debated) scene preoccupations emergent within habitual practices. Thus, they were emergent in the *intersubjective* experience of social interaction. Such preoccupations included professionalism, musical facility, genre, socializing, and activism. These collective values were primary means to identify insiders. Who the Other was to indie scene participants varied: Occasionally, it was an artist whose pedestrian pop ballad became a number-one hit on the radio or a club owner who only hired top-40 bands or offered a low gig fee. Generally, however, indie scene professionals set their sights on extra-musical others who were viewed as a threat to Bali's social and environmental wellbeing—primarily, corrupt politicians or foreign investors. They became targets for musical critiques on social and environmental injustices in Bali.

Scene values did more than just determine who was “in” or “out,” however; their constitution through social interaction illuminates an overarching value impacting all others: the value of the scene itself. The indie scene was a source of social familiarity and comfort. It confirmed that these individuals were not alone in this world. It was home. Similar to Victor Turner's conception of *communitas* (1982), the scene provided both immense pleasure and immense security and the music produced and enjoyed was a resource for affirming affinities—and, hence, friendships—that were as critical to scene sustainability as the thing to which participants directed their social attention: the process of producing music. Whether we consider the significance of *communitas* to be the outcome of a Southeast Asian society that places high value on socialization, an inherent

quality of marginalized groups, or a yearning to be *accompanied* that is part of the human condition; belonging mattered immensely to the individuals who participated in this study. Will Straw observes in heavy metal and dance music communities that “particular musical practices ‘work’ to produce a sense of community within the conditions of metropolitan music scenes” (1991, 373). Similarly, indie scene participant practices worked to produce the social and musical values that strengthened individual subjectivities and social alliances.

The approach of this study, combining phenomenological theory and emphasizing social interaction—both as the source for the production of meaning and the method to elucidate such meaning through collaborative participation and professional work (or public ethnomusicology), demonstrates the specific ways in which individuals engage with transnational processes as acting and evaluating agents. This study illustrates that such artists are no mere pawns in a western-centric, hegemonic music industry, but rather, they are active co-theorists in a vernacular cosmopolitanism that yields new models for understanding the flows of expressive cultures and modes of social engagement.

Rundown

In the interest of conveying music-related practices as lived experience—both for the music producers who primarily guide them, as well as for the researcher who comes to know and recognize these individuals through social interaction within such practices, this study incorporates the language of music-making within the indie scene. “Live

performance,” for example, will often be referred to as “gig,” in concurrence with the English language word’s use in everyday practice. The Indonesian language “*nongkrong*” will replace its English language descriptor, “hanging out.” “Run-down” refers to the stage schedule for any live performance and, in the current usage, to the focuses of each chapter. The six chapters of this dissertation correspond to the six years of my own accumulated experience in the indie scene and build upon one another to elucidate a new stratum of indie music practices and subjectivities. Berger and Luckmann write, “A detailed phenomenological analysis would uncover the various layers of experience, and the different structures of meaning involved in, say, being bitten by a dog, remembering having being bitten by a dog, having a phobia about all dogs, and so forth” (1966, 21). Each chapter digs deeper to explore lived experience in the indie soundworld, in order to understand how shared beliefs about creativity, professionalism, and socializing developed in practice.

The study continues with Chapter 2, “‘*Aku Dimana*’ (Where Am I?): Indie’s Place in Bali,” a chapter that contextualizes the indie music scene within the history, geography, and public ideologies that circulate around it. Though this study will argue for the importance of careful attention to how *individuals* define themselves and their social relationships through music, it is important to note how the scene may be taken up in broader critical discourses. This chapter looks at the urban environment of Denpasar as home to a variety of music professionals who operated within independent soundworlds, often unaware that other musical ways of being-in-the-world existed. It examines Bali’s violent past to elucidate a history largely glossed over by academics, tourism professionals, politicians and local news media—the Balinese intelligentsia, as Michel

Picard would call them (1990)—in order to understand how myths about a “dwindling island paradise” have been resourced throughout history to fuel public discourse about the importance of cultural purity and, in most extreme cases, to justify cultural prejudice and violence. Finally, this chapter introduces a number of the musicians who participated in this research by describing their first encounters with the musics that informed their creative projects and defined their professional lives.

Chapter 3, “‘Masa Kecil’ (Childhood): First Impressions, Firm Commitments, and Stage Beginnings,” examines the essential practices that composed young artists’ earliest experiences making music together, including home listening, band rehearsals, song writing, and first performances. The chapter focuses on initial “pathways” (Finnegan 1989) that led musicians to make their first professional commitment to the indie scene through live performance. It explores the compulsory instrumentation, pedagogical styles, sites for performance, musical and performative aesthetics, and scene commitments shared among scene practitioners. It also highlights genre as a socially composed—and perpetually refashioned—organizing principle that assembles and defines aesthetic experience, disseminates ethical principles, and discloses social (and disciplinary) alliances.

Chapter 4, “‘Jadilah Legenda’ (Becoming a Legend): Professionalism and Praise” focuses on the practices of a small number of artists who joined the island’s venue owners and sound engineers to become part of a professional music industry supporting live performance and recording. Album production, national and international touring, music videos, media relations, and artistic collaborations were all activities by which the indie scene’s senior and most commercially successful artists established a level of

professionalism that helped to strengthen the local music scene. The success stories of artists like SID or Navicula, who recorded multiple albums, garnered a national following, and toured internationally, provided inspiration for other rising acts to try to accomplish the same. While this study's focus remains intensely local, Chapter 4 also argues that an examination of this independent music industry can yield an understanding of the nature of the modern music industry in other contexts. For example, recording artists in the United States also have to contend with the fact that consumers are no longer willing to purchase hard copy audio recordings. Music industries function to promote and sell recordings, performances, and merchandise, but none can continue to rely on outmoded types of music products—primarily, the compact disc. For over ten years recording sales have dramatically declined in Indonesia and elsewhere, forcing a shift in business models that prioritize live performance and merchandise sales. Bali's independent music industry can be viewed as a microcosm of what modern music business practice involves, and its unique solutions to this shared problem may be relevant in other contexts.

Having established what it takes to become a professional in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, “‘Do it Yourself is Dead, Now we Do it Together’: The Ties that Bind (or Unwind),” moves into what it takes to maintain an indie scene where so few professionals were actually able to financially support their families through their craft. This chapter examines the ties that bind indie scene participants together, of which the joy of the performance event, financial gain, or media accolades were only a few. An ethic of sociality and desire to belong also strengthened scene participants' commitment. This chapter examines how face-to-face and online socializing deepened friendships beyond the performance event

and opened up new opportunities for professional collaboration. Given the wide variety of genres that were accommodated within the scene—as well as levels of musical proficiency—genre, creativity, or talent did not prove to be important criteria for social alliances within the scene. Rather, extra-musical social values and concerns over social and environmental challenges in Bali led scene members to engage together in music activism—a crucial practice that draws people together to find solutions to collective problems.

The study concludes with Chapter 6, “‘Bersama Kita’ (Together with Us): Musical Belonging and Collaborative Professionalism, a consideration of what is learned from a practice-centered research model and theoretical framework drawn from sociological phenomenology. An interesting parallel materializes, between a research model that proposes the importance of communication between individuals for the development of social alliances, and the frequently conscious effort of scene members to determine their own musical, professional, and social destinies. The practices that gave rise to indie meanings were directly responsible for a scenic atmosphere of camaraderie and social closeness locally, and for a deeply felt allegiance to likeminded indie scene participants elsewhere in Indonesia. The final chapter examines how the scene has changed in the six years since the study commenced. It highlights artists’ most recent achievements, as well as the tremendous challenges Bali now faces—and to which scene participants continued to respond. The chapter makes an argument for long-term engagement with research collaborators for mutual professional benefit. It examines the ethnomusicologist’s potential role as a professional and activist alongside music producers. The future of ethnomusicology requires different kinds of collaborative

research and collaborative professionalism. The project concludes with a reexamination of how phenomenology enables the ethnomusicologist to situate herself as an active part of social interaction with an obligation to contribute to the dialogue.

This written account is supplemented by a weblog featuring numerous photographs, audio-recorded interview excerpts, and a selection of album covers and concert and tour posters, as well as embedded band video clips and recorded songs to provide the reader with access to the sights and sounds of Bali's indie scene. Where a particular passage is strengthened by reference to such audio or visual materials, I have included a recommendation and citation to the blog within a footnote. Each chapter is titled after a song recorded by one of the bands at the center of this study, and the accompanying blog includes a video clip or audio recording for the featured song. This is aimed not only at drawing the reader deeper into the social and professional worlds of these musicians but also at theorizing through musical texts overarching values repeatedly expressed.

This chapter opened by presenting the lyrics to a song by Gede Robi, as he is known in his solo format. More commonly he is Robi, frontman for Navicula. The lyrics, penned by a British expatriate and long-term resident of Bali, Kayti Denham, paint a world in turmoil and in need of the clarity a clear sky can bring. Bali's music activists see their craft as a means to provide that clarity and "build a fire" to ignite real social and environmental change. The indie music scene supports a larger network of artists (including musicians, visual artists, filmmakers, photographers, dancers, poets, and others) and activists (including the men and women at the forefront of Bali's anti-development campaigns) who want to save Bali from itself. "Freedom Skies" calls for

action to “temper the greed.” An undercurrent throughout this study is the critical state of Bali’s natural environment as of 2014, as unrestrained tourism development continued to devastate Bali’s delicate ecology and displace local businesses and residents. The indie scene’s most important contribution to Bali’s collective wellbeing is not, in fact, its contribution to the island’s musical ecology, but rather its to decelerating the island’s demise.

Chapter 2: “Aku Dimana” (Where Am I?)¹: Indie’s Place in Bali

Brilliant Cacophany

As I ride the streets of Denpasar by motorbike, the city’s cacophony is striking. The streets are invaded by organized sound, and everything is amplified. The azan (call to prayer), distorted and crackling, emits from the loudspeaker of a masjid (mosque). The processional for ngaben (Hindu cremation), accompanied by the beleganjur,² passes down the middle of the street, overwhelming public spaces and bringing traffic to a grinding halt. Javanese dangdut³ and pop songs emanate from a local kafe, a place where men purchase libations (and company) from attractive, young women. In front of a neighborhood distro,⁴ savage voices and furious guitars unite in the guttural roar of a death metal anthem during an album release party, as 100 young fans head-bang, mosh, and spill into the streets, congesting traffic even further.

For more than five years, I called this city home. I traversed its urban landscape in search of this aural thickness; though my ethnographic proclivity for rock music more often steered me toward the distro than the temple. The highest profile gigs tempted my taste for the hard stuff and drew me farther down the road to the many live music venues located in Bali’s southern tourism districts,

¹ Song by Dialog Dini Hari, *Lirih Penyair Murung* (2010).

² *Beleganjur* is a Balinese processional ensemble found in many types of Hindu ceremonies and secular festivities. The ensemble is described in greater detail below. For a detailed study of *beleganjur*, see Bakan 1999.

³ *Dangdut* is a national popular music genre initially influenced by Indian film music and Malaysian orchestral music, with the added vocal embellishments common to Muslim recitation and West Asian song. This genre will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5. For additional information on this genre, see Weintraub 2010.

⁴ A music and band merchandise shop.

centered in Kuta and radiating out in capitalistic sprawl to the surrounding neighborhoods of Seminyak, Kerobokan, and Canggu to the northwest; Tuban and Jimbaran to the south; and my adopted city to the northeast. An unobservant newcomer may overlook the borders between these distinct neighborhoods, as all compose the “overpopulated bedlam” of southern Bali (as a Balinese friend once dubbed it). My surroundings were nearly devoid of the lush, tropical vegetation that once blanketed the landscape of an island I hear was once a paradise (Vickers 1996)—before I lived here. I encountered more motorbikes and trash heaps than forests and rice fields and conceded, despondently, that Bali’s ecological health is all but defeated by parasitic tourism and overdevelopment.

*But where the natural environment has been decimated to make room for more shopping centers, villas, and five-star hotels, musics blossom in astonishing heterogeneity: there is music for gamelan, ranging from ancient ensembles and sacred repertoires played for an audience of gods and ancestors; to truncated and swiftly crafted touristic productions of *kecak*⁵ and *legong*.⁶ There are *kreasi moderen*, experimental new compositions created by music conservatory students and instructors for island-wide competitions, and the most surprising fusions of bronze cymbals, bamboo flutes, and electric guitars, broadly called *musik etnik*. National and international pop dominates domestic radio’s airwaves, while top-40, DJ house, and drum and bass proliferate Kuta’s crowded nightclubs. There is*

⁵ *Kecak* is a form of dance drama developed in the 1930s as a tourist presentation, which most frequently presents brief selections of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. *Kecak* emphasizes interlocking vocal parts that imitate the various instruments of the gamelan.

⁶ *Legong* refers to a court dance in which the performers, historically young girls, present welcome offerings to the gods, spirits, and ancestors. It has been shortened and aestheticized for tourism consumption, and the term has come to colloquially denote various and sundry dance styles tailored specifically to tourist audiences (see Picard 1990).

West African drumming on the beaches and kirtan sing-alongs in the yoga classes. Islamic recitation, Christian hymns, and the tintinnabulation of Hindu priests' bells fill disparate places of religious worship. Experimental jazz, regional pop in the Balinese language (pop Bali), metal, punk, classic rock, emo, and reggae each find audiences in diverse live music venues—from smoky bars to university parking lots, to temporarily-erected stages in dusty soccer fields.

Pausing at the distro and taking in the death metal band, there is more to be explored in this metal gathering than a uniform “subculture” (Hebdige 1979) in an Indonesian city. The musicians and audience assembled depict a cross-section of the indie soundworld (Frishkopf 2009): There is Robi, frontman for grunge/psychedelic rock band Navicula, headbanging on the front row. Just inside the distro's entrance, Jerinx, drummer for punk band Superman Is Dead, chats with Dodix, his band's manager and a ska and dancehall DJ. Dadang, Navicula's guitarist and frontman for folk trio Dialog Dini Hari (Early Morning Dialogue), orders a beer at the garden café. And Edward, an Australian music teacher at a nearby international school and founder of alternative rock band Balian (Healer), stands with his bandmates at the outskirts of the audience's viewing area, engrossed in the drummer's precision on the double-kick-pedal.

Urbanization and Musical Diversity

Living in the city of Denpasar, I observed many musical ways of being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1962). The illusion of a tranquil paradise peddled by Dinas Pariwisata,

the province's tourism board, dissipated as I absorbed southern Bali as a progressively teeming metropolis and locus of multiple, disparate soundworlds. In this chapter, I temporarily leave the term "scene" and adopt the term "soundworld" from Michael Frishkopf's article on Islam and Sufi Music (2009) in order to explore how stances on expressive culture (Berger 2009) delineate borders of belonging, functioning to at once enclose certain practices and aesthetics and simultaneously distance others. Frishkopf, who also draws on works in sociological phenomenology, defines the soundworld as "the affectively charged sonic-social intersubjectivity, that lived social world of empathetic understanding, intuitive communication, and shared values, as developed, expressed, and reproduced in the social experience . . ." (2009, 52). Berger and Luckmann would identify the multiple soundworlds that may exist within a single geographic and temporal location as "different partials universes" that "coexist...in a state of mutual accommodation" (1966, 125).⁷

While, as Ruth Finnegan (1989) concludes in her work on music-making in an English town, the term "world" implies a wholeness, permanence, and "autonomy" (ibid. 190) that does not sufficiently capture the ephemerality and elective space of belonging that "scene" implies, I momentarily embrace the notion of "world" in order to elucidate how it was often presented to me by my interlocutors: as a complete, stable, and taken-for-granted domain. This will help to explicate how the processes by which expressive cultures may develop in largely mutual exclusivity, though they may share the same geographic and temporal presence. As Finnegan concedes, "a 'world' can carry its own

⁷ Turino employs Bateson's term *frame* (1972), arguing that "different genres of art, in themselves, cue particular frames of interpretation" (2008, 14). The notion of soundworld, however, more carefully elucidates the intersubjective and enduring nature of meaning-generation through music-making and suggests the difficulties of moving (and mutual understanding) between such music practices.

internal evaluative criteria (ibid., 188)—a point to bring to bear when examining why indie music may be undervalued or ignored in other soundworlds. Furthermore, this chapter explores the musical diversity of an urbanized Bali in order to contextualize the indie music scene at the center of this study and problematize the incessant and misleading myth—as present in most academic texts as in tourism brochures—that Bali is a culturally homogenous island accompanied only by the humanly organized sounds of bamboo, bronze, and iron.

Bali, a primary site for the Suharto-era “Master Plan for the Development of Tourism” (Picard 1990), now attracts more than four million visitors annually (Perkembangan Pariwisata Bali, 2014). Few domestic or foreign tourists venture farther inland than the hills of Ubud, less than twenty miles north of the airport, preferring to vacation near the sea in Bali’s southernmost *kabupaten* (regency), Badung, most frequently in popular resorts areas within Kuta, Nusa Dua, and Sanur. In the city of Denpasar, hundreds of thousands of domestic newcomers from Java, Lombok, Flores, and elsewhere in Indonesia have settled and search for work in the Badung regency’s tourism sector. Some have cultivated a permanent home and raised children and grandchildren in Bali’s most populous city. Balinese, too, have moved away from their “home” villages to pursue economic opportunity in the south, settling into new *perumahan* (neighborhoods) in Denpasar and planting roots in “foreign” *desa pakraman* (customary villages).

Denpasar challenges the idyllic image of the Balinese village set amidst the cascading rice terraces. Yet distinctions between urban and rural environs in Bali cannot be easily reduced to the assumption of accelerated urbanization. For example, all of

Denpasar's territory is legislatively divided into *desa pakraman*—customary villages. Although it is the seat of the island's modern government, the city itself is mapped according to customary law: its three administrative sub-districts (*kecamatan*), South, East, and West Denpasar, are further divided into forty-three customary sub-districts (*desa adat*) spanning a total of 209 villages (*desa pakraman*). Lifestyle for many Balinese in the city (*kota*), however, is markedly different from that of a “rural” village (*kampung*). Whereas in the village, extended families usually share open-air compounds on inherited land, follow the agricultural cycle for local rituals, and socialize through the customary and ritual activities of the *banjar* and village temple (*pura*), city residents—with the exception of those native to Denpasar—usually live outside of their customary *banjar*. A range of domestic habitats have developed: Everything from makeshift shanty houses erected near worksites for poor migrant laborers to one-room rental units or student housing (*kos-kosan*), enclosed houses in newly-developed *perumahan*, and even modern, multi-level apartments can be found in the city. Hindu Balinese must adjust their ritual activities around a 40 to 50-hour workweek. Socializing opportunities are diverse and expansive, and can include everything from drinking sodas and smoking cigarettes in front of a convenience store to spending ours on social media at local cafes with Wi-Fi to hanging out at friends' *kos-kosan* or apartments. These alternative spaces for socializing and a marked disassociation with customary village practice (Harnish 2005, 108) provide opportunities for collective creative activity that are largely distinct from the village and which cultivate the island's indie music scene. The city is home territory for indie scene participants, both in their domestic and musical positionings.

The accelerated urbanization and transformation of Bali's social and natural environment have correlated with increasingly frequent encounters between people of diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, religions, occupations, *and* musical tastes. As Adam Krims argues (2008)—and the opening vignette illuminates—geographic space is an important means of understanding music, and vice versa. Music, crafted by people sharing a small geographic space, is both a means of socializing the city's public spaces (See Baulch 2007) and defining its multifarious aural environment. The socially complex urban environment prompts the coalescence of multiple genres and socially disparate individuals into distinct and deeply meaningful modes of musical being-in-the-world.

The musical versatility of southern Bali presents a clear case for how processes of cultural adaptation impact music-making. Scholars examining musical change in Bali⁸ generally argue that rapidly changing musics are strategies for coping with this rapidly changing world. The influx of domestic and foreign newcomers through tourism and internal migration, on the one hand, and the adaptation to a capitalist economy and assimilation of globalizing communications technologies (Wallach 2008), on the other, accelerates the diversification of musics in Indonesia's many urban environs, from Jakarta to Medan to southern Bali. Popular musics, including the many genres that fall within the purview of the indie music scene, tend to flourish through these social, economic, and technological developments. Yet the relationship between urban development and musical change is neither mutually dependent nor predictable, as Krims warns: "...music will not be the ultimate determinant of urban change nor will the changing city propel musical developments...neither register will cause each other..." (2008, xix).

⁸ See Bakan 1999, Baulch 2007, Harnish 2005, Heimarck 2003, Laskewicz 2004, and Picard 1990.

This study will demonstrate that southern Bali's urbanizing environment is a reservoir of vibrant resources for musical experimentation among indie scene participants. It will also demonstrate how a deep commitment to making music together fosters both a professional commitment to music's sustainability as both scene and industry, as well as a social commitment shared among the most actively engaged scene participants. In my observations, and through conversations with scene participants, a stance toward indie music as professionally and socially valuable consistently overshadowed its reputation for being a symptom of a rebellious youth subculture or assimilated globally circulating aesthetic culture. Jeremy Wallach writes on other Indonesian popular music scenes in the 1990s, "...although I had anticipated that I would find a link between Indonesian popular music and the inculcation of an ideology of 'modern individualism' among Indonesian youth, in fact I found music to function primarily as a tool of sociability, for collective enjoyment rather than private aesthetic experience" (2008, 8-9). Similarly, the musical cosmopolitanism (Feld 2012) I encountered in Denpasar was not a rejection of Balinese tradition or sociality, but rather, simply an alternative form of "musical intimacy" (ibid.). This study upholds the task of conveying the complexity of aesthetic cultures circulating in this singular geographic space, similar to Steven Feld's work on jazz in Accra (2012). Further, like Wendy Fonarow's study on British indie music (2006), which is also rooted in practice theory (Bourdieu 1979), this project takes as its study object the habitual, music-related practices through which scene participants formed lasting relationships and cultivated their individual social and professional positionings. But rather than employing the sociologist or media scholar's

performance theory to make sense of the scene, this project sees the practices and subjectivities as emergent within a specific historical, geographic, and social context.

Early Musical Contacts

A neglected substratum of rock music history is its development in Indonesia. This genre, which has primarily Bali's indie soundworld has had a presence in Indonesia for almost as long as it has had a name in the United States. Wendi Putranto, a senior editor at *Rolling Stone Indonesia*, explained in an interview that as early as the late 1950s, Indonesians were able to listen to artists like Elvis Presley and Bill Haley and the Comets via radio station broadcasts from the Philippines (Putranto, interview, 2010). The guitar was already a familiar instrument, having been introduced by the Portuguese through maritime trade and assimilated into a local popular music genre called *keroncong*. Putranto claimed that, during this time period, young people drew a correlation between the sounds of *keroncong* and Hawaiian ukulele, via Presley's adoption of the instrument. The ukulele quickly gained popularity in Indonesia in the 1950s, during which time several Hawaiian-themed music clubs opened their doors. During this same time period, the Tielman Brothers, Indonesia's first rock band formed together in Surabaya, East Java. The band of siblings moved together with their Dutch father to The Netherlands in 1957, and music experts like Putranto credit them with first introducing rock n' roll to the Dutch. While The Tielman Brothers enjoyed substantial fame in Europe, they were not well known in Indonesia until the early 2000s, when recordings of their early performances were uploaded to YouTube.

For most of the individuals at the center of this study, the foremost rock bands in Indonesia—and points of local reference for all bands who came after them—were bands like Koes Plus, who formed in the early 1960s, and God Bless, who began performing in the 1970s. These earliest rock acts took up the generic parameters of pop and rock, but recorded original songs in the Indonesian language and incorporating clear and dominant references to the local. Forty years later, for many young people, rock music was a recognized component of Indonesia’s popular music history and an important part of the Balinese soundscape, and Indonesia’s formative rock bands continued to ignite local passion for homegrown rock. Robi Navicula was only in primary school when his father, who was also a musician, played him a recording of band God Bless. Robi recalled being instantly “hooked” on rock music, calling his first encounter an epiphany. He said it was the first time he realized that Indonesians could make great rock and roll. While later he would cultivate a taste for foreign artists—everything from hair metal bands Skid Row and Guns n’ Roses to early alternative rock like The Melvins and, later, grunge bands like Nirvana, Alice in Chains, and Soundgarden that heavily influenced Navicula—he credited hearing God Bless with first inspiring him to become a rock musician (Robi, interview, 2009). Rapcore band Geekssmile also sited God Bless as an influence. Though stylistically their music differs greatly, God Bless were a catalyst for the band to pursue careers as rock musicians. Made Bayak, Geekssmile’s guitarist, additionally acknowledged a contemporary act, Bandung hip-hop group Homicide, for inspiring the band to take on social and political issues in their songwriting (Bayak, interview, 2010). Artistic influences may, of course, be extra-musical, as Robi and Dadang Navicula demonstrated: Robi cited disappeared poet Chairil Anwar as an influence on his social

and political idealism (Robi, interview, 2009). Dadang, who was also frontman for folk trio Dialog Dini Hari, shared this influence. In addition to citing folk musician Iwan Fals as an important influence, he mentioned that reading novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer inspired much of his songwriting for Dialog Dini Hari (Dadang, interview, 2009).

Metal and hard rock bands of Bandung, West Java nourished the roots of Indonesia's harder-edged underground in the 1970s. Artists covering their favorite songs by hard rock legends such as Black Sabbath and Deep Purple ushered heavy metal into the Indonesian soundscape (Rawk 2004). Two decades later, in tandem with the increasing popularity of death and thrash metal, as well as the widespread melodic punk fanaticism surrounding the internationally popular band Green Day, the terms *alternatif* (alternative) and *bawah tanah* (underground) emerged as popular designations for bands playing *aliran keras* (hard genres) like punk, hardcore, death metal and grunge. In Indonesia's urban centers, the term *bawah tanah*, or alternatively the English language version *underground*, further indexed rising urban-based music scenes, focused around these genres and their various subdivisions.

Bali's most acclaimed rock bands, including grunge/psychedelic rock band Navicula, punk band Superman Is Dead, rockabilly band The Hydrant, and psychobilly⁹ band Suicidal Sinatra—who have all been playing together for nearly two decades—gained their earliest musical influences through offline resources like print fanzines and original, pirated, or copied cassette tapes passed among friends, as well as via television

⁹ Psychobilly is a genre that melds rockabilly and punk rock. Suicidal Sinatra's sound is personified by band member Kape's skillful performance on an upright bass. The band's lyrics often include overt references to the Indonesian "badboy," including urban slang popular in Jakarta and references to drinking arak (palm wine).

and, in particular, the now defunct MTV Indonesia.¹⁰ Navicula's founding members gravitated toward Seattle Sound and bands like Pearl Jam and Alice In Chains in their early years. Superman is Dead was strongly influenced by California punk band Green Day, an affinity that intensified when the band played in Jakarta in 1995 and their album was distributed in Indonesia. International bands that performed in Indonesia beginning from the 1970s and including acts like Deep Purple, Metallica, and Green Day became primary influences on Balinese acts, despite the fact that few Balinese musicians were able to see them perform. The Hydrant reached back further in rock music history, however, in comparison to their rock peers, to rockabilly and classic rock's roots, emulating in composition, performance style, and fashion, the music of Elvis Presley. Electro-rock band Discotion Pill's was one of the first acts to identify an Asian band as an early influence. Although the band's founder and frontman, Dizta, began his performance career in a rock cover band, he was instantly attracted to the idea of mixing rock and electronica (*elektronik campur rock*) after hearing Panic at the Disco's music. A chance trip to Japan, however, provided Dizta with his strongest musical influence, when he saw legendary Japanese electro band Boom Boom Satellites perform (Dizta, interview, 2009). Finally, bands born in the Internet turned to social media, blogs, online magazines, YouTube, and music file sharing services to source their primary musical influences.

As Baulch (2007) and Wallach (2008) document, several circumstances in 1990s Indonesia led to the solidification of underground scenes in the nation's urban centers: Media deregulation in the early part of the decade brought international recording companies and MTV to Indonesia, making more readily available to young musicians

¹⁰ Among research consultants, the website 4shared was the most popular international site for accessing pirated, usually low-quality mp3 files. Most, however, download pirated mp3's via one of hundreds of locally developed file-sharing enterprises.

and fans the music recordings, video clips, and photographic images of their favorite performing artists from the west. Following the Asian monetary crisis of 1997, however, local music distribution outlets were no longer able to afford foreign cassettes purchased through mail order catalogues, and they were forced to redirect resources toward local music (Wallach 2008, 36-37). The crisis, therefore, led to increased support for local underground artists. Television stations, scrambling to fill empty advertising slots in their programming, began featuring music *klip* (music videos) by local musicians (Baulch 2007, 26).

Under the post-Soeharto political era of *Reformasi* (Reformation), artists enjoyed unprecedented political and artistic freedom, which Bart Barendregt and Wim van Zanten suggest contributed to an increase in original compositions by underground artists—some dealing with contentious political issues that would have been out of bounds during *Orde Baru* (The New Order) (2002, 81). A number of large-scale underground music events in the latter part of the decade brought bands and fans dispersed throughout Indonesia together in the cities of Bandung, Jakarta, and Surabaya. Finally, a substantial increase in the number of cassette releases by underground bands performing original material between 1995 and 2000 provided young artists with a number of new, local sources for musical inspiration (Wallach 2008, 36-37). In the urban environments of Bandung, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Malang, Medan, and—in Bali—Denpasar and Kuta, local underground music scenes emerged, sharing in common a predilection for hard rock genres and unimpeded passion for the foreign artists who popularized them, as well as a commitment to DIY (Do It Yourself) and “go local” ethics (Luvaas 2009) for music production and promotion (Wallach 2003, 36).

While Java and Jakarta have been home to rock bands since the 1950s, rock music in Bali is a more recent phenomenon. Navicula, Superman Is Dead, The Hydrant, and Suicidal Sinatra were essentially the first generation of Balinese rock acts to write and perform original music. The early history of Bali's underground is well covered in Emma Baulch's *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali* (2007). Baulch describes the emergence and amplification of punk and metal scenes, as well as the ultimate decay of Bali-based reggae, in a seminal work that demonstrates the particular ways in which young people make a scene happen. But Baulch's research concluded in 1998, and much has changed since the underground's formative heyday, as this study will demonstrate. By the early 2000s, *indie*, an English-language abbreviation of "independent," largely replaced *underground* in industry, media, and everyday usage. In its association with music, indie generally comprised two meanings: Firstly, it was a business and social ethic that suggested a proclivity for independently produced projects over those by contract with a major music/entertainment label. Secondly, it was a stylistic category (also called "indie rock") that gained popularity in the 1980s and 90s in the United States and the UK. In Bali, the former usage is much more widely recognized and accepted.¹¹

On my second visit to Bali in 2008, the term "indie" had already been coopted for commercial interests by the mainstream music industry to define so-called non-mainstream bands, as well as by large corporations riding the tidal wave of interest in underground music for branding and marketing strategies to target young consumers. Tobacco companies, for example, sponsored indie band competitions and nationwide

¹¹ A genre of indie pop has also gained popularity in the last decade in Indonesia, particularly in Jakarta (See Luvaas 2012). The term's association with a specific genre, however, has not confounded its usage as a signifier for a set of shared values concerning the business of making music.

festivals and used the youthful, hip, and “cutting edge” imagery of the indie scenester to define their brand images. Due to the commercialization of the term, most of the artists whom I interviewed were hesitant to employ the term to describe their own music, though they conceded that it was the greatest common denominator to define the variety of genres that were at once at home in their local music scene.

I first began using the term “indie” during research interviews after I encountered clear resistance to the term “popular music” (*musik populer*), a term I had previously assumed to be the best designation for what these artists performed. Research participants, however, took popular music, to mean “pop music” (*musik pop*), and more specifically, either “national pop,” (*pop nasional*), or pop in the Indonesian language and marketed nationally via major labels in Jakarta), or “regional pop” (*pop daerah*), genres of music in a regional language marketed to a regional market like Bali or West Java. Artists thus suggested that “popular music” was antithetical to the “anti-pop” projects occupying them. “Rock” may seem initially to be a fitting alternative, since a majority of the bands I researched performed some derivation of self-defined rock or hard music (*musik keras*). Few, however, defined their style with such a simple designation. Furthermore, the term would exclude a number of bands that also played central roles within this music scene and performed “softer” genres like folk and blues. These included folk bands like Dialog Dini Hari and Nosstress and blues solo artist Made Mawut.

I began to suspect that indie would be an acceptable alternative to popular music when, during our interviews in early 2009, electro rock group Discotion Pill and melodic punk band Scared of Bums each used the term to describe the music scene to which they claimed to contribute. Furthermore, music critic and event organizer Rudolf Dethu and

musician Dadang suggested that the term indie adequately captured the spirit of non-mainstream music, without referring to a specific genre of music. Ideally this would simply be called a music scene among others within Bali—though that, arguably, would make it difficult to index for those unfamiliar with Bali. Furthermore, the same predilection for nonmainstream music, grassroots organizing, and independent music projects characteristic of indie scenes in the 1990s and early 2000s remained important to scene participants in the late 2000s.

The Right Place, Time, and Circumstance

Bali's indie soundworld is easily located within the urban context of southern Bali. Nearly all indie music producers and recipients live in—or within close proximity to—Denpasar. The indie soundworld was a relatively bounded and autonomous sphere of knowing, operates according to its own *habitus* (Bourdieu 1992). It was a partitioning of knowing by individual music practitioners who developed aesthetic projects that, though familiar to those who recognized their musical influences, were alien to other worlds. So distanced are the inhabitants of different soundworlds by the social and ideological incongruences of their respective sonic surroundings that a close encounter was nearly impossible for all but a handful of outliers.

Following the 2002 Bali bombings, those who possessed the cultural capital to publicly define distinctly “Balinese” performing arts consistently elevated the performing arts of Hindu Bali as those most appropriate for representing “Balineseness.”¹² A

¹² Picard refers to people who assume the financial or moral capital to speak “on behalf” of a general public as the intelligentsia or “Balinese authorities”: “The group I refer to here...is not restricted to the personnel

Balinese, accordingly, is a person who can trace his/her ancestors to a place in Bali, *Pulau Dewata* (The island of the gods), either through birth or marriage, *and* who remains a part of a customary village (*desa pakraman*) throughout his/her life. Religious identification is important throughout Indonesia;¹³ but in Bali, where a strong cultural identity distinguishable from the country's dominant Islam is linked economically to cultural tourism (Picard 1990), the concealment of non-Hindu aspects of Balinese life can be highly profitable. Balinese Hindu religion is conflated with Balinese culture—and the powerful religious regulatory commission (Parisada Hindu Dharma), as well as media investors, journalists, mayors, *banjar* and village heads, and university and arts conservatory teachers and students have been heavily invested in propagating a compartmentalized regionalism that ignores Bali's multi-religious and multiethnic reality. For a moment, I wish to bracket the knowledge that southern Bali is an increasingly culturally diverse region and focus on how music is imagined within this monolithic Hindu Balinese context in order to demonstrate how notions about music's role within religious ritual may demarcate boundaries around indie music as “foreign” (*asing*) in the local context.

Hindu Balinese grow up hearing the music of gamelan at nearly every important village gathering, from weddings and cremations (*ngaben*) to temple anniversaries (*odalan*) and cleansing ceremonies (*melaspas*). In these contexts, music, dance, and

of the Indonesian state in the province, but includes the intelligentsia at large—such as academics, journalists, bureaucrats, technocrats, entrepreneurs, and professionals, who make up the province's ‘public opinion.’ In this respect, the Balinese authorities are those Balinese who are authorized to speak in the name of their island and who are thus in a position to monopolize legitimate discourse on Bali” (Picard 1990, 118).

¹³ For example, every citizen must self-identify with one of the nation's six recognized religions (Islam, Hinduism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) on any number of official documents, including hospital registration, employment applications, and even *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* (KTP), the personal identity card all citizens must possess.

theatre are interdependent parts of ritual life. The variety of musics that composed the indie scene, however, though easily accessible through live performance, television and radio programs, audio recordings, and the Internet, were not immediately “at home” within the ritual soundscape that composes much of Hindu Balinese daily life. The principle of *desa-kala-patra* (place-time-context/circumstance) elucidates this central point regarding indie music’s place in Bali: *Desa-kala-patra* is a fundamental ordering principle for determining customary order—and music’s appropriateness within it. Every action should be performed with careful thought as to the appropriateness of the place, time, and circumstance of that action. The Balinese calendars, interpreted by Hindu priests (*pemangku* or *pedanda*) and healers (*balian*), are important sources for determining the appropriate place, time, and context for all sacred and secular activities in the customary village. *Desa-kala-patra* also requires a consideration of the appropriateness of any form of aesthetic expression within the entire context of an event, including its physical setting, calendric significance, and socio-religious purpose. The place, time, and circumstance of any event involving music, therefore, can be a means to distinguish between the degrees of sacredness between genres and ensembles. An *odalan* (temple ceremony), for example, requires specific ensembles, repertoires, dances, and theater performances that correspond to the sacredness of the space where the performers play. Music like rock, metal, or punk, as genres that had not, as of 2014, been incorporated into ritual practices, were excluded from all sacred contexts. Thus, there were fewer opportunities for a Hindu Balinese does to passively experiencing the genres of music that make up the indie scene than there to experience gamelan, for example. While the many individuals at the center of this project were Hindu Balinese and were

often exposed to (and in some cases even performed) traditional musics of Hindu Balinese ritual, the musics that shaped their own performance styles came via print, broadcast, and online media.

In his exploration of meaning generation through social interaction, Herbert Blumer writes, “Individuals, also groups, occupying or living in the same spatial location may have, accordingly, very different environments; as we say, people may be living side by side yet be living in different worlds ” (1986 [1969], 11). The city of Denpasar provides space for multiple, distinct *soundworlds*—old and new, indigenous and acculturated—to coexist; often unknowingly. The indie music scene, as it was often appresented to me (Berger and Luckmann 1966), was a soundworld largely unimportant or invisible to those who did not call it home. Even other musicians in southern Bali may be light-years removed from the aesthetic preferences, professional positionings, and socio-musical valuations observable in the indie soundworld. As Harnish points out, most studies on Balinese music have focused on gamelan and “ignored the dynamism of contemporary culture” (2013, 189)—thus, overlooking urban music practices such as those of the indie scene (2013, 189). The threads of personal musical proclivities interknitted the indie as a world among worlds of music-making in southern Bali, however, and punk, metal, rock, and grunge were as much a part of the Balinese urban soundscape as gamelan or *kekawin*.

It is on the outside, in alien worlds, that I continue the inquiry now, in order to place indie music practices and subjectivities in space and time alongside other music practices and subjectivities in the city. As an exercise in sociological phenomenology, this project must also account for disputant perspectives that interpret factors like internal

migration, capitalism, and globalization as threats to Bali's musical ecology. According to Blumer, symbolic interactionism posits that "the life of any human society consists necessarily of an ongoing process of fitting together the activities of its members. It is the complex of ongoing activity that establishes and portrays structure or organization" (Blumer 1969, 7). In preparation for a deep examination of the music-related practices that constitute the indie scene—and the subjectivities such practices manifest—this chapter examines how such ongoing processes accounted for indie music's *place* in the *space* of urban Bali—both among indie music producers and outsiders. Borrowing from Adam Krims (2008), "space," in the current usage, refers to the definitive backdrop of abstract "objects" (à la symbolic interactionism) like capitalism and globalization that assemble the city. "Place," on the other hand, is the "assignation of meaning by the people who mix, mingle, and make music in these urban spaces. Thus, "musical 'place' ...becomes a locus of freedom [and] individual self-making..." (ibid., 33).

While this study's scope is limited to indie music, I was also afforded encounters with other music professionals in Bali, including students and faculty at the Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar (hereafter, ISI), the State-sponsored arts conservatory dedicated primarily to Bali's "classical" performing and visual art traditions. I also observed music, dance, and theater performance in ritual settings such as Hindu temple anniversaries (*odalan*), cleansing ceremonies (*melaspas*), and life cycle celebrations (*manusa yadnya*), as well as professional gamelan competitions that culminated with the island-wide gamelan showcase at the Bali Arts Festival (Pesta Kesenian Bali). In late 2008, when I arrived in Bali to commence dissertation research, I envisioned a larger project that would allow me to compare these multiple soundworlds. Recent developments at the ISI

campus would render that project impossible: The school was temporarily closed to the public following widespread student protests over the annulment of Professor Nyoman Catra's appointment as rector. Professor Wayan Rai, an unpopular figure that many faculty and students believed to be corrupt, replaced Catra, in what students and the local media portrayed as an unjust coup following a legitimate election. With limited access to the campus, I had to direct my early inquiries to a small number of students and faculty willing to meet in non-university settings.

A focus on indie music, however, allowed me to traverse more familiar territory: Though I played Balinese *gong kebyar* for more than four years before commencing research, the music-related practices of the indie scene—and the expressive culture it produced—conjured years of musical memories. My indoctrination into Bali's indie scene, vis-à-vis the sounds, happenings, meanings, and identities circulating within it, was as much an exercise in remembering what the musical encounters of my youth meant to me as it was a process of cultural assimilation. Like Luvaas, who shares a passion for indie pop with the bands in Bandung and Jakarta which he documented (Luvaas 2012), I also closely identified with indie scene participants and felt much more “at home,” head banging at rock concerts, chatting backstage with band members, observing recording sessions, lugging equipment on band tours, and comparing notes with music critics and journalists than I ever felt in the settings for music performance more familiar to most Balinese—or ethnomusicologists in Bali.

When I first arrived in Bali, however, I was a guest of an ISI professor and absorbed with conservatory life, despite my limited access to the campus.¹⁴ My research permit was sponsored by an ISI professor, and I often accompanied students from ISI's *karawitan* faculty, a classical music department dedicated to the musics of gamelan and vocal traditions of ancient *kawi* recitation, to group rehearsals and performances. During this period, I discussed indie music with several students and professors at ISI as a means to understand if musicians absorbed in conservatory life knew about and identified with this music at any level. Conclusions regarding the official doctrine and discursive ideologies reflected in ISI's curriculum are based on these interviews. While the following chapters will uplift indie music as a distinctive and meaningful soundworld, these early conversations with "outsiders" to the indie world helped me to understand overarching themes circulating in everyday conversations, local media, academic texts, and conservatory doctrine about what constitutes Balinese music.

Generally speaking, institutionalized doctrines on expressive cultures like music tended to juxtapose musics as *warisan* (heritage) or *impor* (import), based on their perceived *asli* (indigenous) or *asing* (foreign) roots. Most music professionals outside of the indie scene tended to adopt this means of cataloguing music, and their opinions were influential. "Elite practitioners" (à la Bourdieu) in the arts conservatory soundworld, for example, who were part of a state-run higher education institution—and Bali's only formal music program awarding undergraduate degrees—tended to claim more "cultural capital" than indie practitioners, and they influenced news media in public arts programming. According to previous publications on ISI (Picard 1996, Vickers 1996,

¹⁴Due to the corruption scandal that was ongoing throughout the period of this research and my own largely remonstrative stance toward what I believe to be a homogenizing and damaging discourse on music and culture, I have opted to preserve anonymity of research participants affiliated at ISI.

Heimarck 2003, McGraw 2013), as well as my observations and casual conversations with a small number of these cultural elites, Balinese music's diversity was consistently and strategically underestimated, the ephemerality of both sacred and secular styles of "indigenous" music was ignored, and the multicultural urban environment that produces the diverse array of traditional and popular music styles was portrayed as less authentically Balinese, due to the "foreign" influences of domestic newcomers and foreign visitors.

As Picard's observes (1990), ISI, local news media (particularly the *Bali Post*), the regional government (Pemerintah Daerah Bali), and the tourism board (Dinas Pariwisata Bali) have each historically played a role in shaping the parameters of "acceptable" Balinese music. Institutional motives were at once ideological and capitalistic. An essentialized Bali as a dwindling Hindu paradise in the sea of a Muslim nation was signified with those musics most palpably exotic, Southeast Asian, and Hindu to keep tourism revenue rolling in (See Vickers 1989). Such "intelligentsia" (Picard 1990) mined anthropological tales spun (e.g., Bateson and Mead), and idyllic images painted (Covarrubias and Spies) to justify the illusion of Balinese distinctiveness and homogeneity. They quenched tourism's deep thirst (one they have cultivated) for the unique and exotic with aesthetic traditions trimmed and packaged for their benefit, from the *kecak* to the *Legong* (Vickers 1996). These were the symbols of Balineseness in music performance and those that embellished touristic meeting grounds, from the airport to the hotels. Indie music was thoroughly excluded from such definitions of Balinese music.

Violence, Ideologues, and Music

According to the symbolic interactionist's stance, the objects of the world appear immediate and objective only when there is an epistemological break or a social discontinuity. At such moments, individuals and collectivities will direct their attention toward analytical critique and redress. Music may play a central or peripheral role in such crises, but it will most assuredly be shaped by these game-changing moments in history. For the Balinese, the first epistemological break of the 21st century was ignited by the 2002 bombings. It forced Balinese to face head-on previously taken-for-granted certainties: Bali is a safe and peaceful place. Tourists will always come. The economy will continue to grow.

The bombings required a readjustment of expectations of security and economic stability, but they also led to epistemological reformulations of socio-structural ideals. Debates abounded about a culture imbalanced, overwrought with alien and hedonistic influence and in need of spiritual contemplation—and oblation—in order to set things right. In Victor Turner's terms, the bombings ignited a great "social drama" (Turner 1982) that led some to take a vehement preservationist stance and others to embrace new musical and professional trajectories. The tragic loss of life, tremendous personal and social suffering, and a devastating economic crisis caused by the bombings also resurrected a troubling ideological crusade for cultural purity. A tragedy like the bombings occurred because Balinese had not successfully protected their unique culture from external influence, and preservation and tradition become central concepts to those whose careers and financial successes were tied to the myth of a pure Balinese culture and island paradise.

In order to understand why such a conservative discourse about Balinese distinctiveness resonated on an island with a rich history of contact with cultural and musical others, it is important to note that Bali has experienced other forms of cultural violence; but such dramas have often been strategically concealed. As David Harnish points out, “Most literature has skipped this other Bali, where occasional intense violence, environmental degradation, class struggles, Indonesianization, and modernization all co-exist with the timeless paradise image” (2005, 103). In fact, Bali’s violent colonial history set into motion the traditionalist, preservationist, and cultural purist discourses that informed debates on *warisan budaya* in post-bomb Bali. The island’s conservative leaders in the arts, media, and politics rarely acknowledged the Dutch role in introducing discourses of preservation and tradition in Bali (Harnish 2005 and Lewis, et al. 2013), however.

Even the 1965-66 massacres have been historically glossed over: Following an alleged failed coup in Jakarta in 1965, during which six generals were murdered, a surviving officer, Soeharto, strategically overthrew President Sukarno by orchestrating the removal of all Sukarno and Community Party sympathizers from the national government. Anti-communist propaganda spread throughout the nation and armed forces were deployed to suppress a Communist uprising and prepare local militias—often no more than vigilante gangs composed of easily misguided, impoverished young men—to help purge the nation of political dissidents and secure the presidency for Soeharto. An estimated 800,000 to one million people were murdered or disappeared across in Indonesia. In Bali, between 80,000 and 100,000 people lost their lives, often at the hands of their neighbors. Not only self-identified communists, but also intellectuals, authors,

artists, and ethnic minorities were primary targets. The tragedy that silenced almost an entire generation of dissident voices, reinforced high caste authority, and wiped out up to 15% of the island's entire population.

Practically, the massacres allowed individuals to make political and economic gains. Ideologically, however, Balinese justified the massacres by positioning communism as a direct threat to Balinese religion. Anyone suspected to be a communist sympathizer should be eliminated in order to protect Bali's cultural identity. The 1965-66 massacres were a horrific example of how cultural ideologies may be used to cloak more sinister agendas. Perpetrators claiming to support the dissolution of the vilified Communist Party in order to protect their right to religious practice and cultural identification were actually motivated by fear or vendettas and the potential to gain money and power (Cribb 1990). Andrew McGraw writes, "The massacres ensured that ostensibly traditional Balinese values, rooted in a religion centered around ancient ideas of caste, would be maintained and unchallenged for years" (2013, 60). During this period, artists associated with the communist party were murdered, disappeared, or stripped of their professional appointments and ability to compose and perform for a public audience. Shortly after the massacres, an Arts Evaluation and Cultivation Board, *Listibiya*, was established to officially sanction *particular* performing arts considered to be authentically Balinese and "endangered;" but the board was politically pressured to only endorse performers who supported Soeharto's GOLKAR party. Under the State's watchful eye, the Indonesian Art and Dance Academy (Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia) was established in 1966, later becoming a High School for the Arts (Sekolah Tinggi Seni

Indonesia) and, finally, a college degree-granting program, the Indonesian Arts Institute (ISI).

No connection has been publicly made between the violence of the Bali bombings and the 1965-66 massacres, despite the fact that surviving family members have yet to see any form of justice for their murdered loved ones. It is important to contextualize the tragedy of the Bali bombings and their impact on expressive culture within the historical context of violence in Bali, however, in order to understand how unprocessed cultural tragedy can allow discourses on cultural purity to continue to circulate, as well as to understand how musicians reacted to a social trauma, based on their inherited social history. As Berger and Luckmann note, “By virtue of this accumulation a social stock of knowledge is constituted, which is transmitted from generation to generation and which is available to the individual in everyday life” (1966, 41). This is a process that Berger refers to as “retrospection,” and it was a common strategy that research participants used to express *their* music’s meaning in the context of post-bomb Bali.

I argue that a direct line of inheritance exists between the preservationist discourse following the 1965-66 massacres and the preservationist discourse that developed after the 2002 bombings. Following a sharp decline in the tourism industry, during which many Balinese families suffered tremendous financial hardship, a fermenting conservative discourse overflowed. A heated public debate ensued to assign blame, not only to the individual bombers or even their commanding terrorist organization, but also to those commiserate with Bali’s current state of depravity—a world out of balance and irreverent to its gods and ancestors. Political leaders blamed heated Javanese-Balinese relations due to unchecked, swelling internal immigration.

Others blamed the tourists themselves and their imported, hedonistic values. After all, they were the bombers' primary targets. This public debate, propagated through the media and politicians (McGraw 2013, xxix) and embraced by many Balinese across classes and castes, called for the consolidation, promotion, and protection of Bali's *essential* social, religious, and artistic values. The associated press of *Bali Post* assigned a name to this preservationist discourse: It was called *Ajeg Bali*: "Bali erect" or "Bali strong" (Dethu 2011, 43). In a feverish crusade, individuals and institutions invoked Ajeg Bali in public discourses about the importance of uniting the Hindu Balinese concepts of *adat* (tradition; customary law and order), *agama* (religion, referring to the majority Balinese Hinduism), and *budaya* (culture; artistic expression) and evading foreign influence, both Indonesian *and* western (Allen and Palermo 2005). Rites and rituals of Balinese Hinduism, including the musics that accompany such rituals, were identified as primary resources for Balinese identity and, ultimately, the island's salvation.

Ajeg Bali was not only aimed at restoring cosmological balance and helping Bali to heal, however: it was also a strategy to beckon the tourists back. Bali needed to appear exclusively Hindu and, thus, safe from the threat of Muslim violence. Professionals within the news media, the state-sponsored performing arts conservatory, and tourism and development channeled enthusiasm for the Ajeg Bali movement into a calculated concealment of the non-Hindu aspects of Balinese life (*ibid.*). Ajeg Bali's supporters elevated the performing arts of Hindu Bali as most representative of Balineseness. Balinese Hindu religion was conflated with Balinese culture, and the island's multiethnic reality was glossed over. The potency of the Ajeg Bali discourse lies in the illusion that it celebrates resistance to hegemonic forces threatening Balinese culture—both as a Hindu

minority culture in a Muslim nation, and a traditionalistic minority in a rapidly modernizing Asia and world. Yet the people propagating the myth of a Bali Strong are among the wealthiest, most educated, and powerful people in Bali. There is a darker charge of some: According to composer Gusti Sudarta, interviewed by McGraw (2013, 59), many of these individuals were also directly involved or descended from the men involved in the 1965-66 massacres. It should come as no surprise, then, that 36 years later, Hindu religion would be vehemently promoted as the true signifier of Balinese identity, following new cultural trauma of the Bali bombs. To this day a schism of opinion remains between modern-day activists and the surviving family members and who were spurned, jailed, and even murdered due to their alleged involvement with the Communist Party and those who persecuted PKI sympathizers—yet very few people openly discuss the killings. The divide is reflected in the arts as well: As McGraw documents, on the one hand, traditional performing arts—as defined by the modern state art institution—as *warisan budaya* (cultural heritage), were the answer to resetting the balance and attracting tourists back to the island. On the other, experimental and *avant garde* composers sought to understand the bombings through performance. New *kreasi moderen*, *wayang*, and theatre compositions were a means to make sense of what had happened. Within the indie scene, conversations about the killings became increasingly frequent in the 2000s, as a fear of retribution began to dissipate and bands increasingly lent their support to community events organized by lawyers and activists fighting for justice for the families. All of the indie musicians with whom I worked—even those who begrudgingly admitted that their own family members had been involved in the 1965-66

killings—voiced strong support for the surviving family members and opposition to cultural purist discourses.

Close Encounters with Musical Others

Synchronously with the rise of Ajeg Bali, local rock musicians were also reacting to and processing the tragedy. Jerinx, drummer for Superman Is Dead recalled in our 2009 interview, “We never expected that there could be a Bali bomb. So we thought, what is wrong with us? We never colonized others, invaded another country, or another religion. Suddenly that happened, and so that, as well as the second Bali bombing, inspired us. So then from there, most bands in Bali, their lyrics were about that situation and their video clips were about the Bali bombs” (Jerinx, interview, 2009).¹⁵ Rock music became a platform to address the bombings, recover the economy, and heal the island. Underground music was elevated to become a viable local music scene, no longer cast to the fringes of Balinese society and the tourism industry: It took center stage in bars and clubs in southern Kuta, at large-scale charity concerts covered by national and international media, and even in customary *banjar* for neighborhood fundraisers for the victims. Within months, bands Superman Is Dead, Navicula, and The Hydrant were also extended important career opportunities as professional recording artists, when major record labels Sony and EMI offered them multi-album recording contracts. “All eyes were on Bali,” Jerinx recalled, and many artists, across multiple soundworlds, were in a

¹⁵ “Kita nggak ada mikir bom di Bali gitu. Why? Karena kita mikir apa salahnya. Kita, *we never*, tidak pernah menjajah orang lain, menjajah negara lain, agama lain...tiba-tiba gitu, kan. Dan banyak inspirasi juga dari sana, juga terus bom Bali kedua kita banyak inspirasi juga. Kayaknya pas bom Bali kedua tuh rata-rata band di Bali semua liriknya tu tentang situasi itu, dan banyak sekali video clip-clip tentang bom-bom di Bali itu.”

state of feverish creative production. At odds with the purist discourse of Ajeg Bali, indie music was open to all and featured a diverse cast of characters who represented the island's multi-religious and multiethnic reality. Although indie music was not a welcomed aspect of Balinese music-making to Ajeg Bali proponents, it was also not seen as a significant threat. While bands like Superman Is Dead and Navicula earned a national following and critical accolades following the bombings, indie music, as a comprehensive and autonomous soundworld, remained markedly invisible to most Balinese. These artists were living in another world.

In 2008, I discussed the idea of independent soundworlds with those who would become the next generation of cultural elites: I interviewed several students within ISI's *karawitan* department and asked them how they felt about musics like rock, punk, folk, metal, hip hop, or electronica in Bali. Interviews generally supported the conservatory's official party line: most students tended to polarize all musics as either traditional (*musik tradisional*)—generally, any music featuring gamelan or functioning within Hindu Balinese rituals (i.e., sacred music)—or modern, variously identified as *musik hiburan* (entertainment music), *musik moderen* (modern music), or *musik populer* (popular music)—generally, musics featuring the standard four-part band instrumentation of guitar, bass, drum, and vocals and without a religious function. Under such definitions, national and international popular musics, pop Bali, and all genres of nonmainstream or indie music would be classified as *musik hiburan*. Two research participants suggested that the term “music” should only be applied to styles within the latter category. There is no word for “music” in the Balinese language, because any traditional repertoire is indefinable, outside of its relationship to other aspects of performance (e.g., dance and

drama) or distinguishable from its function to facilitate religious ritual. Interestingly, the *musik moderen* and *musik tradisional* divide was a useful shorthand within the indie scene as well: It was a means to distinguish rock, pop, punk, metal, and other guitar-centric genres of popular music from all other “indigenous” Balinese (*Bali asli*) musics.

Where would such guitar-centric genres as punk, metal, or rock fit within a Hindu ritual context in Bali? In a word, in almost all cases, they would not. Indie music genres, as *musik hiburan* (entertainment music), were not considered appropriate “offerings” for a sacred ritual, the fundamental function of a music performance in Balinese Hinduism. Though they may occasionally feature in a *banjar*’s fundraising bazaar, in general, they were not essential components of Hindu Balinese customary life. Appropriate performance contexts for indie musicians, which will be explored in detail in the next chapter, include indoor music venues, open-air concerts (often staged on soccer fields), university celebrations (often honoring a graduating class or faculty/department anniversary), and store or shopping center openings. While in some of these contexts, other “traditional” musics also appeared—a store’s grand opening, for example, almost always featured a *melaspas* (cleansing ceremony) and accompanying offerings of gamelan and dance—spaces for indie music performance were easily distinguishable from those of traditional music.

During conversations with acquaintances at ISI, I often asked what are the major changes impacting Balinese music.¹⁶ In fact, most students were well aware of the role that their own institution plays in standardizing performance styles and in the threat that tourism presents to the preservation of more archaic performance traditions. Several

¹⁶ Interviews conducted at ISI were limited to a small group of musicians and composers within the *karawitan* program, and are not intended to represent complete consensus—particularly among the student body.

lamented the decline in musical diversity and a loss of traditional contexts for performance. Vocational changes brought about by an increasing dependency on wage-based income and expansion of the tourism industry meant that traditional musics were losing their functionality as essential ritual components for agrarian practices (Miller and Williams 2008, 66). Furthermore, complex sacred repertoires that require substantial rehearsal time were less common because performers' work schedules limited the time they could commit to prepare for a performance (Heimarck 2003). While traditional music was heavily marketed as part of cultural tourism, interviewees claimed that tourism was not a favorable means for preserving tradition: Performers catering to this audience inevitably reduced their repertoires in musical complexity and length to make them palatable to foreign visitors. Of course ISI, as a state institution, was also culpable for the island-wide standardization of music. As Picard writes, "the Indonesian government is deliberately centralizing, normalizing, and standardizing the Balinese performing arts" (1990, 47). The standardization was partially motivated by the growing demand for tourist-friendly performance styles.

Several consultants also suggested that imported music styles, including national and international pop music, were also to blame for edging out traditional performing arts by distracting Balinese youth—particularly in the city. Most responses pitted arts that constitute Balinese cultural heritage (*warisan budaya*) against those that reflect the impact of globalization (*globalisasi*). Musics that constitute *warisan budaya* uphold Bali's cultural distinctiveness by figuring in traditional, ritual contexts, while "foreign" musics, or musics contaminated by globalized media—several consultants named pop Bali, a genre of popular music employing the Balinese language, as one such example—

accelerate its dissolution. Students and faculty at ISI often dismissed musics other than *karawitan* as not Balinese (*bukan Bali asli*) and laid claim to the “real” (*asli*) musics of Bali—i.e., those musics that serve as markers of a distinct Balinese cultural identity. Within ISI, as in media and public discourses on cultural purity, Bali’s multi-religious, multiethnic, and multi-musical reality was either grossly underestimated or completely tuned out. Thus, the “space” of globalization was regarded as a looming threat to the “place” of Bali (Krimms 2008).

No one at ISI ever directly addressed the bands at the center of this study, however. With the exception of the most well-known bands like Superman Is Dead or rock bands performing in *basa Bali*, (the Balinese language), like Lolot or Nanoe Biroe, nearly all indie bands were unknown to conservatory students, despite their national and even international reputations. Thus, much of indie music was exempt from the *warisan budaya/globalisasi* debate. While it may seem unusual that trained professional musicians such as students and faculty at ISI would be oblivious to these artists. Their musical attention, however, so keenly focused on the music of *karawitan*, led them to tune out musics that did not matter for their professional objectives. Concomitantly, they were not moving in the same social and professional spaces. ISI musicians rarely, if ever, hung out where indie scene participants congregate. Guitarist, lyricist, and event producer Igo Blado corroborated this conclusion in our 2009 interview, noting that, particularly while ISI students are still enrolled, their musical focus leaves little room for anything else: “When they’re still in the traditional period, they’re steeped in traditional music. They haven’t yet explored other kinds of music, you know? Traditional music like that, in the modern world, it has its own path. When they’re older and more mature musically

and in their ability, then they may start to experiment. An exploration can be carried out.”¹⁷ (Igo, interview, 2009). Igo was inferring that students at ISI may seek to form professional collaborations with Balinese bands, as their careers progress. This did not occur at any point between 2008 and 2014, however, though traditional performing artists outside of the conservatory did take part in several indie music events. The conservatory’s own musical outliers, however, as documented by McGraw (2013), have included experimental composers of *musik kontemporer* that deliberately sought to dismantle ISI’s hegemony over musical conventions. Their music, McGraw observes, “embodies the apparent tensions between culture as represented and lived, between the idea of Balinese culture and the experience of living it” (2013, xxiv). Thus, it would erroneous to paint the arts conservatory, or any other collective making music in ideological broad strokes. There were a few *avant garde* composers who overtly resisted “attempts by conservative social movements to define (and contain) Balinese cultural generally” (ibid., 83).

Indie music professionals and fans rarely had cause to traverse the same spaces as ISI musicians, though they shared in common the desire to become music professionals. As Rudolf Dethu, a music writer, event producer, and former manager for Superman Is Dead and Navicula commented: “Well, young people around here [in the indie scene] generally preferred icons like Superman is Dead. So their relationship with ISI, you could say, was almost nonexistent...People like us—young people who like punk rock or indie

¹⁷ “Hampir nihil untuk menggabungkan. Itu tuh hampir nihil karena memang di umur seperti itu ketika dia mendalami tradisional itu masa, masa dia memang mendalami music tradisional. Belum melakukan eksplorasi dengan musik berikutnya, iya kan? Musik tradisional seperti itu di dunia modern juga berjalan sendiri-sendiri. Ketika dia sudah dewasa secara musikalitas maupun kemampuannya, baru dia akan melakukan percobaan itu. Eksplorasi itu baru akan dilakukan.”

pop or something like that. It's almost non-existent, you know?"¹⁸ (Dethu, interview, 2009). In fact, indie music producers and fans tended to share more common ground with artists and teachers outside of the conservatory, who were actively seeking to revalue ancient performance styles, however: Musical innovation and diversity were primary values within the indie soundworld, and as such, indie music producers also opposed music's homogenization, as well as its control by powerful elites—although their adversary tended to be the pop music industry and its hegemony over nonmainstream music genres. Musicians sought to professionally, stylistically, and socially expand popular music past celebrity obsession, mundane romance ballads, and slick, market-driven productions.

The more common crossover between the indie scene and ISI occurred through visual arts students: Made Bayak, bassist for Geekssmile, is also a well-known visual artist who completed his visual arts degree at ISI, as did Monez, an illustrator and graphic artist who produced merchandise, album covers, and posters for Balinese bands, including Navicula. Furthermore, many visual arts students frequented rock concerts and indie scene hangouts and good friends with indie musicians. These artists tended to be non-traditional in their artistic persuasions, however, and according to our conversations, were somewhat marginalized on the ISI campus. They had few friends among classmates and formed their own, off-campus collectives (*komunitas*) to make up for a lack of acceptance on campus. Komunitas Djamur (Mushroom Society), for example, was formed by a group of artists who wanted to pursue artistic projects that were not part of

¹⁸ "Anak mudanya itu, kalau anak muda yang di sini mereka itu lebih milih...kalau yang rata-rata...ikon buat mereka itu adalah band Superman is Dead. Jadi hubungan mereka dengan ISI itu bisa dibilang hampir tidak ada. Orang-orang yang kayak kita-kita, orang-orang yang muda-muda itu kepengennya main punk rock gitu atau main music indie pop yang gitu-gitu. Mereka hampir nihil, ya?"

ISI's standard curriculum and who were barred from gathering on campus at night. Their name comes from the concept that mushrooms can grow (*tumbuh*) anywhere. Komunitas Djamur collaborated with bands like Navicula and Geekssmile to organize multimedia art events, including environmental conservation workshops and art exhibitions.

Wallach (2008), Laskewicz (2004), and McIntosh (2010) have examined the combination of genres of global popular music with indigenous styles in Bali.¹⁹ Within the indie scene, this practice was commonly relegated to the categories of jazz fusion or *musik etnik* (ethnic music), popularized by artists like guitarist Balawan (Harnish 2013) and band Nyanyian Dharma (Igo, interview, 2009), as well as in *musik kontemporer*, highlighted in McGraw's study (2013). Such cross-genre collaborations were not common within the indie scene. As Dethu commented, "That area is primarily filled with jazz players who actually already have done quite well. They don't want to join [band] festivals again. It would be better if they join Java Jazz Festival, right?"²⁰ (Dethu, interview, 2009). Furthermore, with creativity and newness as primary stylistic values, indie musicians were unlikely to seek out commonplace genres—the "mundane," in Dethu's opinion—as creative resources. Dethu elaborated further on incorporating traditional music into rock performance: "Yeah, you could say that there is rarely any interest in that. I mean, to make modern elements connect with local, ethnic ones..."²¹ (Personal communication, 2009).

There were notable exceptions, however, where bands incorporated traditional

¹⁹ See Laskewicz 2004 and McIntosh 2010.

²⁰ "Dan itu, wilayah itu diisi oleh kebanyakan justru pemain jazz yang sudah punya jam terbang tinggi sebenarnya. Dia ga bakalan mau ikutan festival seperti itu lagi. Lebih baik mereka ikut Java Jazz Festival, kan gitu ya?"

²¹ "Ya bisa dibilang jarang yang punya *interest* kesana ya. Maksudnya menyambungkan unsur modern dengan etnik lokal itu, kan..."

stylistic references in their music. Moel, founder of the death metal band Eternal Madness, spearheaded the most popular underground fusion act during the 1990s.²² He referenced the gamelan in several of the band's songs, observable in his use of a pentatonic scale. He also described his band's "pioneering" genre as "lunatic ethnic death metal." SID and Navicula each featured audio samples of Balinese music on their albums released under Sony: *Superman Is Dead* (SID) included traditional instrumentation on *Angels and the Outsiders* (2009). Navicula included samples of Balinese *ketuk*, the gamelan's timekeeper gong, as well as *suling*, a bamboo flute, on their album *Alkemis* (Alchemist, 2005). Both also included iconic symbols of Bali in their promotional materials for their respective tours to the United States: For their 2009 Warped Tour poster, SID cast aside their trademark rockabilly/California punker fashion and donned *pakaian adat*, the attire customarily worn by Balinese Hindus to attend religious rituals and important village functions. In 2012, Navicula distributed a poster featuring the band members rendered in illustration below a dramatic *topeng barong*, a well-known lion-like mask featured in any number of Balinese ritual events as well as tourist performances.²³ In fact, over the years, I observed many instances in which the iconic symbols of Bali—whether in instrumentation (the *suling*), fashion (*pakaian adat*), or lyrical reference (to Bali's natural beauty or cultural heritage) became increasingly commonplace and acceptable. In this way, indie musicians and artists dedicated to the advancement of *karawitan*—though they may be distanced by their primary social and aesthetic preoccupations—did, in fact share the tendency to romanticize iconic Balineseness.

²² Wallach (2008) also describes Eternal Madness' music as emblematic of a fusion of Balinese gamelan and heavy metal stylistic traits. He fails, however, to note that Moel is in fact from Java and only superficially references Balinese traditional music by his use of the pentatonic scale.

²³ See the band's American tour posters in "Albums and Gigs" on the research blog (<http://baliunderground.com/albums-and-gigs/>).

Occasionally elements of traditional music featured in live indie performance. During the launch for their 2010 album, *Upeti Untuk Macan Asia* (Tribute to the Asian Tiger), Geekssmile staged a special appearance by three performers well known as excellent drum kit players. In their home villages, however, they were better known as talented *kendang* (a double-headed drum) players for the *beleganjur*. Beleganjur, which translates to “walking warriors,” is a Balinese processional ensemble consisting of bronze, knobbed gongs, cymbals, and *kendang*. It is a fixture in a variety of Hindu ceremonies, as well as music competitions and festivals held throughout the island. The three drummers, including Geekssmile’s own Nurdi, created a composition featuring three *kendang*. In another event, rock band Ripperclown featured a *kecak* group for their 2010 album launch at a large nightclub in Kuta. The band and the *kecak* performers staged a collaborative performance that thrilled the packed house of Ripperclown fans. Dethu said that he is not surprised to see such crossover tropes, but that it takes band maturity before artists develop the skills to experiment with local sounds and adeptly meld them with their own music. He used Navicula as an example: They’re thirty years old now and just beginning. From the beginning Navicula was just grunge. Slowly they have begun to add in ethnic sounds. That’s normal. It’s part of growing up, right?”²⁴ (Dethu, interview, 2009).

No one cited a stylistic reason for why most indie artists avoided experimenting with traditional musics, and there is nothing inherent in Balinese traditional music that would prevent an appreciation of fusion projects in the future. Rather, the cosmopolitanism of the indie scene simply freed up space for practitioners to be curious

²⁴ “Sudah tiga puluh itu baru mulai ya. Kalau Navikula kan memang awalnya grunge aja. Pelan-pelan mulai isi etnik-etnik gitu. Biasa, bagian dari pendewasaan kali ya? Tapi kalau anak-anak mudanya bisa dibilang enggak.”

about and engage with (Appiah 2006) *other* styles of music—also present in the immediate soundscape. In the early 2000s, only a small number of more senior bands—whose members were older than most, have been playing together longer, and typically have commercially released a larger number of albums—incorporated Balinese traditional music into their art. Dethu and Igo’s explanations for their own preferences for rock music during our 2009 interviews provides an underlying reason for why indie musicians preferred other sounds: “Ok, maybe it’s because, if I say it like this: maybe it’s just another day. I mean, [traditional music] has become part of our everyday. So it’s nothing special. Like take me. A simple example: I often talked about this when I first came back [from working abroad]...A while back, I had the opportunity to work on a cruise ship for five years. I always hated to be in the Bahamas, St. Thomas, the cities in the US Virgin Islands, places like that. But I always loved going to New York City. Yeah, so when I was in New York, when I was in the big cities, I was happy. When I was in the islands, I thought, it’s the same like my island. Well maybe because we, as Balinese...when we’re young, Balinese study Balinese dance. But by the time we’re in junior high school we can already hear metal, or rock.”²⁵

“We find new idols,”²⁶ Igo interjected.

“Yes, we’re looking for new idols. Later, when our explorations have gone

²⁵ “Kalau di sini mungkin karena, kalau saya bilang sih...*Maybe it’s just another day*. Maksudnya sudah jadi bagian sehari-hari kita. Jadi, gak istimewa. Sama kayak seperti saya. Contoh sederhana ya: Saya baru cerita banyak tentang ini ketika saya sudah balik di di...kembali lagi ya. Saya dulu sempat di kapal pesiar selama lima tahun. *I always hated to be in* Bahama, St. Thomas, kota-kota US Virgin Island gitu-gitu. *I always love going to* New York City. Ya jadi ketika saya berada di New York, ketika saya berada di kota-kota besar lah ya saya senang. Ketika saya berada di daerah kepulauan, *it’s the same like my island*. Nah mungkin karena itu kita memang kalau orang-orang Bali. Kecil-kecil kita pasti di...rata-rata, orang itu belajar nari Bali atau belajar ya dari kecil. Cuman biasanya ketika sudah SMP sudah denger-denger metal, denger rock itu mereka.”

²⁶ “Mencari idola baru.”

everywhere, then we'll come back again,"²⁷ added Dethu (Dethu and Igo, interview, 2009).

Dethu and Igo's comments suggest that part of the attraction of so-called foreign musics is their newness. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that they were rejecting local tradition. Rather, they were simply directing their attention toward other styles of music at a particular point in time.

More common than the mergence of "traditional" and "popular" styles was the travel of individuals *between* soundworlds. As illustrated above, Hindu Balinese performers in indie bands may also perform with gamelans in their home villages. Gembull, for example, drummer for rock bands Navicula and Balian, was also a renowned *kendang* player who conducted performances by his *banjar*'s gamelan whenever he returned to his home village for ceremonies. Marmar, a tattoo artist and vocalist for the heavy metal band Psychopathic, studied Balinese *beleganjur* and sang in a school choir long before he attempted to learn how to play rock music (Marmar, interview, 2011).

Of all of the musicians I knew in the indie scene, Marmar was by far the most versatile, though his band rarely played in public by 2008, when I commenced research. His ability to adapt to new musical forms and instruments was impressive, and his tastes in music incredibly versatile, as I learned while hanging out in his tattoo studio, where the most unexpected songs would issue from his iPod. In fact, his flexibility as performer is directly related to his interest in (or exposure to) a variety of styles of music. When I asked him why he was able to become proficient at multiple interests and styles of music, Marmar suggested that it was due to his ability to easily memorize musical patterns—

²⁷ "Ya mencari idola baru gitu. Nanti ketika sudah eksplorasi kemana-mana baru balik lagi."

whether he was playing in beleganjur, singing with his metal band, or accompanying a recording on guitar.²⁸ This ease in memorization inspired his interest in learning about new styles of music. What he interprets as an innate ability to make sense out of and repeat patterns in music allowed him to explore and enjoy a wide range of styles of music. He commented, “I just hear and unconsciously I memorize the music step by step. Not consciously. But I can often memorize the notes, whatever kind of music. So I think the music is from my own self, meaning there is no limit. I can accept any kind of music” (Interview, 2011).²⁹ Marmar’s comment suggests that an ability to make sense of the music provided him with a sense of ownership over—and thus, affinity for it. Furthermore, Marmar was able to connect his earliest musical memories to his current musical affinities. He was conscious of how his own biography impacted what he likes and performs and providing him with a diverse aesthetic palette: “The first time I remember listening to a song, I really remember that well; I was in primary school or kindergarten maybe, and I heard something from the reggae or disco era, something like that. I forget the name of the singer, but a lot of those songs, I heard them, I would definitely remember the notes from front to back. In fact there are a few songs that I remember from when I was little and can still pick up the guitar melody” (Marmar, interview, 2011).³⁰

²⁸ See “Chapter 2” in the research blog to listen to an excerpt of Marmar’s comments on his multiple musical proficiencies (<http://baliunderground.com/chapter-2/>).

²⁹ “Aku cuman dengar aja secara tidak sadar aku hafal musiknya salah satu yang nggak sengaja musiknya aku sering banget hafal nada-nadanya, apapun itu musiknya jadi aku pikir itu dari diri aku sendiri, berarti tidak ada batasan untuk aku menerima music itu dari jenis apapun.”

³⁰ “Waktu pertama kali aku ingat aku dengerin lagu, itu ingat banget aku SD atau masih TK mungkin aku dengerin itu jamannya music reggae-reggae yang disko itu ingat sekali. Macam-macam ada siapa ya waktu itu. Ah aku lupa penyayinya, tapi banyak banget lagu itu kalau sekarang diputer lagi lagunya, ada yang mutarin lagu aku pasti ingat nadanya dari depan sampai belakang. Bahkan ada beberapa lagu, aku ingat beberapa lagu dari kecil yang bisa aku ingat sampai melodi gitarnya.”

Marmar was busy in the late 2000s studying the *reyong*, a rack-gong instrument for *gong kebyar*, after achieving proficiency on *ceng ceng kopyak* and other instruments for the *beleganjur*. In the late 2000s Marmar also began studying Balinese dance, including several masked dances, and he had become one of his village's preeminent designers for the *ogoh-ogoh*, massive effigies of demons and monsters that are marched through the streets of Denpasar on Ngerupuk, the night before Nyepi, the Balinese New Year. One may assume that, like Gembull, most Hindu Balinese musicians would begin performing the traditional instruments of the gamelan, more common in ritual settings, and then move onto instruments like the guitar or drum kit as they become interested in rock and other popular music styles. In fact, for Marmar, the opposite happened: He was performing with his band Psychopathic long before he began playing traditional instruments. Marmar explained that learning a new instrument or style of music—any other art form, for that matter—is simply a matter of gaining competency in a new medium. It is as simple as “moving” between traditions or soundworlds. He said, “Because it’s only like this: So I started from ordinary modern music that I was already playing and just moved to traditional music instruments. The instruments, the tuning is different, but actually I can still play any of the notes” (Marmar, interview, 2011).³¹

While there was no stylistic overlap between his roles as a metal vocalist and a *beleganjur* player, Marmar was comfortable moving from one soundworld to another. He compared this versatility to session players on album recordings or musicians who moonlight with top-40 bands at cafes in order to earn a living: they transition between

³¹ “Karena itu cuman kayak gini, jadi mulai dari music modern yang biasa yang aku mainin itu pindah aja, pindah media aja ke alat music tradisional aja...Instrument nada-nada yang terbatas tapi sebenarnya tetap seperti itu jadi semua nada dinyayikan.”

genres of music with ease. Marmar's multiple artistic competencies, like those of jazz guitarist Balawan (Harnish 2013), is exceptional. According to Marmar, this does not point to his exceptional talent, however, but rather his ease in making sense of and memorizing new compositions, as well as accessing multiple performance styles: As a native to urban Denpasar, Marmar could easily access the indie music scene; most local metal shows occurred within a ten-kilometer radius of his home. He also lived in the *banjar* (hamlet) of his birth. For Marmar, participating in traditional performing arts was as simple as walking down the alley to join his friends for rehearsals. For musicians like Robi, who lived in Denpasar and apart from his home village in Tabanan for most of his life, accessing traditional repertoire was more challenging, and Robi boasted no technical proficiency in playing gamelan—though he is interested in learning (Robi, interview, 2009).

In addition to musicians who moved between soundworlds, professionals working “behind the scenes,” including sound engineers (live and studio), stage crews, and event organizers inevitably interacted with musicians and audiences for a variety of styles of music. Igo, for example, organized numerous live music events featuring pop Bali, jazz, and ethnic fusion acts. Anom Darsana, a professional live sound engineer and owner of Antida Studio and Antida Soundgarden, an outdoor music venue, launched an annual jazz festival in 2012 that featured national and international jazz acts. This did not undermine his position as one of the indie scene's staunchest supporters. By the end of 2014, he continued to mix for most major rock concert on the island and organized an annual music festival showcasing hard rock bands, called “Rocktober.” Not only did Anom covet versatility in his ability to mix live sound for multiple genres of music (as

instrumentation varies, so will amplification, miking, and mixing preferences), but he also cultivated it in the types of live music events he produced. He formed close professional and personal relationships with artists from multiple Balinese soundworlds.

Indie in the City

Despite any assumptions about (or hopes for) Bali's homogeneity, southern Bali's socially complex environment has motivated the development of multiple, distinct *soundworlds*—old and new, indigenous and acculturated. The relationship between urbanization and the development of popular musics—and the commercial industry that follows and supports their activities—has been well researched.³² Peter Manuel writes, “Cities, with their concentrations of wealth, power, heterogeneous social groups and institutionalized forms of musical patronage, naturally constitute focal socio-musical environments. One of these processes is the development of new forms of mass entertainment, including popular musics” (2007). Cities assemble both music producers and an accessible markets of consumers, and their culturally heterogeneous environments foster syncretic musical forms. Musical collisions generate new generic trajectories, and as Krims describes, “urban change and musical change [are] mutual conditions of possibility...” (2008, xxi).

Yet indie music does not immediately fall within an academic, touristic, or vernacular understanding of Balinese music. Even English-language academic publications in music studies and the social sciences (Harnish 2005, Baulch 2007, Wallach 2008, Luvaas 2013) highlight indie music's “foreignness” as transnational,

³² See Nettl 1978, Reyes Schramm 1979, Manuel 2007, and Krims 2008.

global, or western. If Indonesia's rock music history dates back to the earliest years of the music's development in the United States and Europe then it is difficult to imagine what is gained by calling it an import? I argue that it is misleading to conceptualize the place of music only according to its generic roots. It also undermines music producers' own stances on the music's locality within their lived experience. Furthermore, as Lewis, et al. point out in a focused study on the monument erected to honor victims of the 2002 bombings, "...Indonesians have as much claim to a history of pluralism, tolerance, and pleasure-based aesthetics as any Western social group" (2013, 40). The indie music scene should not be reduced to an outward-looking, youth subculture (Hebdige 1979) rebelling against the local for several reasons: Firstly, the majority of the musicians at the center of this study considered themselves to be mature, music professionals who had been performing together for more than a decade when we first met. They were in their late twenties or early thirties and many were married and had their own children. Secondly, as the subsequent chapters will show, though these bands may be peripheral in their home environment, several have achieved national and even international fame with their music and have a tremendous influence on the mainstream national recording industry. Thirdly indie musicians never suggested to me that they reject the culture of their parents. They rarely expressed feelings of oppression or resistance to their Balinese or Indonesian heritage—though they did acknowledge their generation's greater freedom of musical choice, corresponding to easier access to diverse forms of expressive culture. Musical choice was almost always framed as a matter of personal taste, not as a matter of resistance. Musicians *chose* to perform—and fans to consume—the music for which they formed the strongest affinity.

Though there were occasions when authority figures were treated as a threat to the indie scene's vitality—usually in terms of the government's lack of interest in or sponsorship for popular music—in general, the indie soundworld continued to spin with little concern over what outsiders did or did not think about it. Furthermore, they shared a concern with many cultural elites that the real enemy to Bali's creative vitality is the tourism upon which they were all overly dependent. For most indie musicians, Bali's greatest threat was environmental and cultural desecration due to overdevelopment to support tourism, and many maintained strong friendships with environmental activists and used the stage to report on these issues.

One aspect of my own critical stance on elevating the indie soundworld as an object of study is to muddy the waters on what constitutes Balinese music by examining more carefully how individuals' personal musical encounters led them to embrace certain styles, while dismissing others. There was no predetermining factor for which musics would capture their attention; both the social context and individual agency imparted to each of us determines where we direct our attention, in the short or long term. As the examples of artists crossing soundworlds demonstrate, being a part of the indie scene did not mean rejecting one's Balinese identity: Most of these artists were not “disaffected youth,” nor were their performances of punk, metal, electro rock or grunge music “reactions of resistance to ‘traditional,’ gong-centered music” (Harnish 2005, 117-118). Rather, they possessed different kinds of musical competencies at once accommodated personally and socially by others who shared their interests. There is some validity, however, to the concern that foreign expressive cultures threaten musical diversity in Bali. It impacts the indie scene, as well: While local artists may invest their professional

lives toward making music for a local audience, in fact most young people continue to prefer popular music by foreign artists. Furthermore, all of the artists at the center of this study cited foreign musical influences before mentioning Indonesian artists. Only when pressed did they mention any peer influences. Bali's indie scene is still young, however, and the next generation of young rockers may cite Superman Is Dead and Navicula as their primary influences, just as these bands looked to God Bless and Iwan Fals in their youth.

Of course, the dominance of foreign expressive cultures is not only limited to music. It extends to other creative realms as well, as I learned from illustrator and graphic artist Monez, who was frequently commissioned to create album covers and posters for local bands. Monez cited the popularity of Japanese comics as one of the reasons he and most other Balinese illustrators failed to build a fanbase for Balinese comics (Monez, interview, 2010). The only exception was the popular *BOG-BOG* comic series, which played up iconic images of Balineseness, such as the bare-chested boy in his *udeng* (a cloth head covering for Balinese Hindu men),³³ while also critiquing many of the modern threats in Bali, from HIV to overdevelopment. Most artists in Bali struggled to build a local audience, despite their steadfast creative dedication and talent. Even as late as 2014, bands Navicula, Nymphaea, and Dialog Dini Hari all claimed that their most loyal fans were in Java and Jakarta, rather than in Bali. Thus, as will be explored in Chapter 4, touring became an important means for bands to build a fan base to support their work where local interest falls short.

³³ See "Albums and Gigs" in the research blog for an example of a concert poster created by a BOG-BOG illustrator (<http://baliunderground.com/albums-and-gigs/>).

Returning to the metal album launch that opened this chapter, it is clear that a genre perceived to be born in a distant “elsewhere” (Baulch 2007) is, in fact, somewhere at home in the soundscape of a Balinese city: As Berger notes, “whether one hears music as foreign or familiar—and the kinds of valences one attaches to such foreignness or familiarity—depends deeply on one’s past social experiences, the ideas about music and identity in one’s social world, and the larger political discourses within which one’s thought is embedded” (2009, 14). In the 1970s in Indonesia, young metalheads avidly followed metal’s globally famous artists, accessible initially through foreign magazines and fanzines (Putranto, interview, 2010), in the 1990s on cassettes purchased through mail order catalogues (Baulch, 2007, 57) and on MTV, and most recently, on various Internet sites, including streaming radio websites, file-sharing servers, social networking sites, and locally authored digital fanzines and weblogs. During Indonesia’s metal heyday in the 1990s, a number of bands produced original albums, distributed regionally or nationally. A handful of these received critical accolades in the nation’s most widely circulating entertainment magazines. Factoring in tours to Indonesia by metal bands like Metallica, Sepultura, Lamb of God, and Iron Maiden, and it becomes clear that a plethora of resources satiate the musical proclivities of Bali’s metalheads and inspire homegrown experiments.

For some musicians, the freedom to choose among popular musics intensifies the affinity and sense of ownership they feel for such genres. Robi likened his first experiences with grunge band Nirvana to “falling in love” (*jatuh cinta*). In fact, in his own poetic turn of phrase, his love affair with grunge transformed into religion: “Music became like religion to me. I worshiped bands like my gods” (Robi, interview, 2009).

Where traditional musics may be taken for granted and passively received, these indie musics were actively sought and, in some cases, passionately coveted (Luvaas 2013). Dizta reminisced about his first exposure to electro-rock as if it finally helped him to visualize what he wanted to create with Discotion Pill. It was as if he was waiting for someone to lay the groundwork for the creative projects he would go on to pursue. He commented on buying Boom Boom Satellites' CD and listening to it when he returned home, "When I got back to Bali I listened to that CD and thought, wow! This is a good fit. It matches with our original concept, like that" (Dizta, interview, 2009).³⁴ Sometimes artists took the sense of ownership one step further, framing their first encounter not as "the band that influenced me," but rather as, "the music I have been waiting for."

Cohabiting soundworlds were a modern reality in post-bomb Bali, and for the majority of the individuals I interviewed, that cohabitation is unproblematic. One can move between soundworlds because one is capable of accommodating, not only multiple styles of music, but also multiple modes of being-in-the-world through music. As Berger writes, "At any given moment, our experience is organized into a complex foreground/background structure, with some phenomena emerging with sharp detail at the focus, others appearing in a blurry fashion in the background, and still others receding into the ever more distant horizon" (2009, 33). What makes up the foreground of our attention will inevitably shift with time, new social encounters, and new musical encounters and interests.

³⁴ "Sampai di Bali saya denger CDnya, waaaah, kayaknya ini pas nih. *It's matching with our concept first like that.*"

Out with the Old

By late 2008, Ajeg Bali's popularity had already significantly waned. The words appeared only occasionally in newspaper editorials in the *Bali Post* or *Radar Bali* or as fading, acrylic lettering painted on the sides of a handful of Balinese-owned *warung* (street eateries) or *kaki lima* (mobile food stalls). All of the indie music professionals with whom I spoke about it disregarded the movement as *passé* and a reflection of the Balinese propensity for discipleship rather than critical thinking. I remained intrigued by the movement's former ubiquity and provocative claims to musical heritage and wondered who may still be invested in its essential goals. On Ngerupuk, the night before the Balinese New Year, I attended a theatre performance at Taman 65 in Kesiman, Denpasar, the family compound and education center founded by surviving family members of men executed during the 1965-66 massacres. Two of the family's matriarchs delivered a theatrical performance lambasting the absurdity of this movement as fatuous and irrelevant for modern Bali. In indie music performances, the ways in which Bali's plurality was displayed defied Ajeg Bali's call for cultural purity. Furthermore, onstage commentary and frequent offstage conversations about the United States' negative local impact—by introducing the consumer goods packaged in the plastic that was clogging up the city gutters and rivers and winding up in the ocean to the unachievable ideals of affluence, fame, and romantic love propagated in movies and television programs—more closely resembled statements by the terrorist organization behind the bombings about why Bali was targeted in the first place: Bali is complicit with western sins.

While the words Ajeg Bali lost their influence, the ideology of cultural purity that existed prior to the bombings was still spun with alternative words by certain cultural

elites. By examining historical tendencies to idealize cultural distinctiveness, Ajeg Bali may be understood as a repetition of colonial, artistic, and anthropological myths of a culture on the brink of destruction. To evade its downfall, Bali must posit a united front of Balineseness: Bali Erect and Bali Strong. While Bali is certainly under serious threat by overdevelopment, I contend that stifling its plurality and artistic diversity will do nothing to address the immediate environmental crises, including a lack of clean water, waste management, or food security and a dwindling natural heritage, on land and in the sea. I take a critical stance toward such movements as detrimental to local creativity. I am also confident, however, that the net cast by intelligentsia in order to capture those essential qualities of Balineseness is filled with tears through which slip many of the city's fascinating social and musical incongruences. Discourses like Ajeg Bali are alienating, not only because they are racist, but also because they originate from a capitalistic opportunism rather than a genuine interest in protecting the island for the good of *all* of its citizens.

In the meantime, multiple soundworlds continue to coexist. Marmar's musical foregrounding serves as an example: When he was preparing to perform for the *ogoh-ogoh* processional in his village on Ngerupuk, he foregrounded the performance of *ceng ceng kopyak* and his role as a youth leader in the *beleganjur*. His identity as a well-known metal artist was backgrounded—though not forgotten or dismissed. When he sang with his metal band Psychopathic, the *ceng ceng kopyak* was backgrounded to make space for attention to the stylistic standards of a metal vocalist. The notion that an individual can take on multiple subjectivities is not unusual. We have different modes of being-in-the-world, based on our expectations in action—and interaction with others. Where we pay

attention at an office, interacting with our colleagues; at a metal concert, headbanging in the front row of the audience; at church after a poor night's sleep, in a car driving to work, or at the dinner table with our children all require different kinds of subjectivities. This is easy enough to grasp. What has been troubling in popular music studies, however, is to attach *one* kind of intentionality that doesn't allow for multiple *musical* subjectivities. This has led to rock music in a non-western context often being reduced to a rebellious subculture. Sometimes, the rebellious trope is valued: Superman Is Dead was the first Balinese band to introduce the “bad boy” image to Balinese youth as an acceptable stance. They represent a fundamental juxtaposition between a Balinese collectivism and conformity and the need for independent thought—in fashion, music, and activism. Jerinx SID often criticizes what he sees as a creative and intellectual stifling that needs to be challenged in order for young people to find their voice. But in all encounters with music, it is possible to not only pay attention, but also assign variant values. Thus for Gembull, being a *kendang* player and a drum kit player in a rock band were not contradictory roles. The rock band did not challenge his lived Balineseness, nor did his obligations to his village as a *kendang* player bar his participation in other soundworlds—though scheduling often proved challenging for musicians who wear these different hats and must negotiate a full ritual calendar and gig and touring schedule. Negotiating these various subjectivities was a source of pride and, generally, enjoyment for those who play multiple parts in Bali's modern musical reality.

There are many ways to musically be Balinese. To use Berger's analogy, to think of musical texts that fit within a cultural context—as they have often been theorized within studies on music in the Indonesian or Balinese context—is to say that “a cow is in

a corral or a car is in a garage” (Berger 2009, 98). Balinese culture is not an enclosure into which expressive forms must fit. Rather, conceptions of both music and culture are developed through social interaction. Moments of rebellion against so-called cultural norms, or the assumption of “non-normative stances” (Berger 2009, 102) within the indie music scene, were “deeply sedimented” (Berger 2009, 102) in values of individuality and independence. They were undercurrents of both the music and conversations I had with the scene’s most active participants. This rebellious stance defined their opposition to environmental exploitation and other social injustices within Bali that have, for far too long, been accepted as unproblematic or necessary in the name of economic prosperity.

To reduce SID to a rebellious punk subculture, disengaged with the local, would be to ignore the band’s personal motivations and their place in historical and social context. It is important to understand why SID felt the need to resist certain (but not all) cultural norms, what these norms were, what SID accomplished with their resistance, and how others received their rebellion. There is much that certainly needs to change in Bali—from justice for victims of political violence to a deceleration of tourism development and environmental conservation. What SID called their bad boy attitude was in fact consciously developed and intelligent “call to action” (Berger 2009) to be more aware and think more critically about one’s home. SID encouraged their fanbase to become involved. As he explained in an interview with a local magazine, from which he extracted a selection and posted it to his Facebook profile, “If young people are accustomed to consider something ‘safe’ as a cool thing, come on! When will change happen? The world is so fake. It needs a counterweight...” (Jerinx, 2014).³⁵

³⁵ “Kalau anak-anak muda terbiasa menganggap sesuatu yang ‘aman’ sebagai hal keren, kapan dong perubahan bisa terjadi? Dunia yang begitu palsu ini butuh penyeimbang...”

The phenomenologist's project is to examine the *ongoing* unfolding of practical knowledge that is never limited to meanings assigned by elites. By examining how indie music socialized the space of the city it become clear why it continued to be valuable for its practitioners. According to Krims, in the city "'space' represents coercive forces of social constraint, for instance, the social inequalities of so-called globalization, or the homogenizing structures of the shopping mall and service-industry employment" (2007, 32). In Bali, even in the city, space is often defined according to one's relationship to a customary, Hindu village. Those who do not belong have limited social and legal rights in the place they call home. "Against the negative value of space," Krims continues, "'place' then assumes a liberatory force in this dichotomy, representing the ways in which people and their expressive cultures revalidate localities, create symbolic attachments, and reaffirm the importance of their specific and unique corners of the world. Place, in other words, becomes, in this most common rubric of analyses, the model of liberatory resistance to space." (ibid.). While there are many means to achieving a place in the city, this project focuses on the "musical place" of indie.

Music, as more than the sounds produced (Small 1998). It is also the history, beliefs, and *practices* that surround its performance. In order to understand indie's place in the city, let us return to Bourdieu's *habitus*:

"...systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' or 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor: (53).

A range of professional institutions shape how soundworlds—including indie music—may be indexed. This chapter has illustrated that institutions like the tourism industry and performing arts conservatory influences exclude music such as indie from their definition of Balinese music. While institutions external to the indie soundworld primarily develop an indigenous/foreign or traditional/modern dichotomy, these concepts can be useful in the indie context as well. For example, Marmar identified two broad categories of music which he has studied: *musik tradisional*, specifically *beleganjur*, and *musik moderen*, referring both to the European-style children’s choir to which he belonged in school, as well as to his metal band, Psychopathic. For Marmar, a distinction between traditional and modern refers not to time, but to a distinction between that which he associates with his home tradition and that which he has adopted from outside. Dethu titled his 2011 book *Blantika lini masa: kaleidoskop musik non-trad Bali*, or World Timeline: A Kaleidoscope of Non-traditional Music in Bali). The book’s title and contents, which trace the history of regional pop and band-format genres in Bali, corroborate a simplified—though conceptually useful—polarity between traditional and modern musics. Illustrator Monez distinguished between “traditional” and “urban” art, using the English language derivative for both: “I know that there is a difference between the position of the traditional artists, like sculptors and painters and art that can arguably be called ‘urban.’ So as for the traditional artists, yeah, he already has his own path. He’s already taking off. For myself and others, maybe we have a movement that we want to advance and show that, hey, we are here and we have our own style. It’s not possible for us to follow *their* style” (Monez, interview, 2010).³⁶ Monez has not juxtaposed traditional

³⁶ “Saya tahu itu ada perbedaan antara posisi genre tradisional, artis seperti pematung, pelukis dengan seni yang bisa dibidang urban gitu. Jadi disitu yang tradisional, okelah dia sudah dengan jalannya sendiri. Sudah

and modern, as Dethu and other consultants have. He juxtaposes traditional and urban, a reference to provenance/time and provenance/place. He has also clearly distinguished between two forms of expressive culture (traditional and urban) and suggested that while these two styles may coexist, the former has advanced farther than the latter. Urban art still needs to find its own path.

Most research consultants, however, suggested an ambivalent attitude toward ideologies of Balineseness or Indonesianness. As this chapter has suggested, they argue that their proclivity for globally circulating genres of nonmainstream music is a matter of personal taste, rather than overt resistance to an elitist-germinated agenda for defining “Balinese” culture (Dethu, interview, 2010; Robi, interview, 2010). Just as their music is invisible to heritage preservationists, so the heritage preservation agenda has little impact on their daily practices. Furthermore, consultants never suggested that they identified with subjective hybrids of their Balinese/Indonesian and global selves. They did not behave as disaffected youth seeking to shed their cultural shackles and “modernize” by engaging so-called “western” popular musics instead of seeking out local inspiration; nor did they identify genres such as metal, punk, rock, blues, or reggae as “foreign,” though many could trace the history of these genres back to their foreign roots. These are considered fully domesticated genres. This project will also provide multiple examples of songs that directly reference a consciously defined local and complicate any attempt to disregard Balinese indie music as a xenocentric.

melambung tinggi. Saya dan yang lainnya mungkin adalah gerakan yang pengen merangkak maju dan pengen menunjukkan bahwa, *hey*, kami itu ada dan kita punya trend sendiri. Kita nggak mungkin masuk ke trendnya mereka.”

Conclusion

When I rode Denpasar's congested streets, I was often surprised by the lack of social and musical interaction between distinct soundworlds, despite the audible overlap that incites the city's cacophony. Of course, this corresponds to a lack of opportunity for social interaction among individuals from different social orders. Only for the strange individuals—the multitalented artists or the ethnomusicologists—was a convergence of multiple soundworlds possible. According to Bourdieu, this is a natural condition of the logic of practice, that “without violence, art or argument,” one can exclude practices that are “incompatible with the objective conditions” (1992, 64).

Robi, reminiscing on his teenage dreams of being in a band (*pemain band*), succinctly described the degree of closeness he experiences with this music that is invisible to most of the residents who share his city: “Initially, when I first thought to be a player in the band, it was really like a dream. It was like you're worshiping a super-group like you would your God, you know? It's like, oh they, they're really special, you know. But with Nirvana, they gave me a sense that like this...like they're my neighbors”³⁷ (Robi, interview, 2009).

³⁷ “Dulu awalnya saya sempat berpikir bahwa *to be a...to be* pemain di band, itu adalah suatu yang sangat *dreamy*. It's like kamu meng-*worshiping* suatu *super group*, itu seperti *God, you know, it's like, oh dia*, mereka sangat spesial *ya know?* Tapi Nirvana membawa rasa *like*...ini tetangga saya yang lain.”

“Aku Dimana” by Dialog Dini Hari³⁸

*Among the variety of colors in the visible faces
None that I can embrace and hug*

*All look the same,
The same as usual
All look the same
But where am I? Where am I?*

*Amidst the heavy rain, in the middle of the ocean
But unable to eliminate all hunger*

*All look the same,
The same as usual
All look the same
But where am I? Where am I?*

In 2009, Igo and Dadang crafted a song for Dialog Dini Hari that they intended to describe the bewilderment of encountering a new city or meeting a love interest for the first time. He premiered the song, “Aku Dimana,” when he performed with Dialog Dini Hari in Jakarta during a one-week tour named after one of the tracks from his 2009 album, “Renovasi Otak” (Brain Renovation). The song was instantly popular at local gigs, and on several occasions good-natured jokes were spun into casual conversation that the song was actually about Dadang’s confusion as a village boy in the big city. Performing the song back home in Bali, it took on new meaning as a song about losing a

³⁸ Diantara ragam rupa warna wajah yang terlihat
Tak satupun yang dapat ku rangkul dan peluk
Semua terlihat sama,
Sama seperti biasanya
Semua terlihat sama
Tapi aku dimana, dimana
Diantara hujan lebat di tengah samudra
Namun tak mampu jua hapuskan segala dahaga
Semua terlihat sama,
Sama seperti biasanya
Semua terlihat sama
Tapi aku dimana, dimana

sense of place in the space one calls home. In 2013, when Dialog Dini Hari released a video clip for the song, the latter meaning was highlighted. The band members are separated through much of the clip, walking the streets of Denpasar in the early morning, bewildered and without direction, yet in search of something. They eventually find one another and, without greeting, immediately begin playing music together.

The gamelan, the *legong* dancer, the terraced rice fields, and iconic, stone temples all evoke a Bali a voyeur identifies as a timeless paradise. Indie music, however, traversed a different landscape: It found refuge in the bustling city markets and alleyways, in the small, square green spaces of city parks or on the storefront stoops where the steps have born the weight of decades of friendly engagement with neighbors—*nongkrong*, hanging out. Indie music was just as much a part of the Balinese soundscape as gamelan, but its sounds were as overshadowed by touristic depictions of a Hindu Bali's exotic gamelan as its city streets are ignored overshadowed by the rice fields and pristine beaches. For those who call it home, however, indie music is as responsible for elevating the island's "urban ethos" (Krimms 2008) as the city is for cultivating this music.

Taking in this cacophony, I struggled to imagine that there was any substance to the commonly expressed fear that "globalization" would ultimately flatten musical diversity in Bali. This chapter's focus on the indie soundworld, based geographically in Bali and creatively and professionally on globally circulating music aesthetics and ideals, has intended to render inaccurate the cultural imperialism thesis, and with it, the conviction that rock, metal, punk, and other indie genres are encountered as foreign imports. Rather, with rare exception, consultants for this ethnographic project have relied

on a distinction between traditional and modern musics (or sacred and secular) to define the boundaries of distinct soundworlds. A distinction between domestic and foreign musics does not resonate with these music practitioners. To question musical ownership—by usurping it from practitioners and by conflating origins with authenticity—is problematic, and may serve to gloss over individual perceptions that have nothing to do with the logic of cultural imperialism *or* global hybridities. By examining grounded exchange practices, we can determine the nature and relative significance of these musics to the people who produce and consume them.

Human beings may become allied based on shared ethnic, linguistic, or religious heritage, and music is one way of marking and strengthening such alliances. In Bali, for example the sacred *gamelan gender*,³⁹ played in the innermost courtyard of the Hindu temple, is a sonic reference for Balinese of their shared Hindu identity. Moreover, the sound of a specific *gender* emanating from a particular temple on a pre-determined date indicates to members of the surrounding village that they share an ancestral heritage: The *sound* pays homage to the ancestors for whom that village was once home. But life in the city creates opportunities for people of diverse ethnic, linguistic, ancestral, and religious heritage to interact, and the sounds that symbolize shared subjectivities evolve. The sphere of *musik hiburan* (entertainment music) expands with urbanization, generating musics meant to be performed and enjoyed by individuals from diverse backgrounds. Practices within the indie scene reveal that musical, professional, and social valuation, rather than ethnic or religious alliances, are the key determinants for belonging, and people from very different backgrounds can make music—and music scenes—together.

³⁹ The *gamelan gender wayang* consists of keyed metallophones played in pairs in interlocking parts. It frequently features in teethfilings, weddings, and other Balinese Hindu rituals.

Some individuals in Bali may speak from a position of social or moral authority about what performing arts best uphold Balinese heritage, but their message excludes many. Bali's soundscape is diverse: On an island of just over 5600 square kilometers, on any given night, one can hear the *kecak* chant at a tourist performance, the priest's bell ringing at a temple ceremony, the bright resonance of bronze cymbals during a *beleganjur* competition, or the strange juxtaposition of *gamelan* and guitar in an "ethnic fusion" band. And on any given night one may also encounter a metal band and join a headbanging crowd. An underlying fear that Bali is being overwhelmed by foreign influence continues to feed fuel to a cultural preservationist agenda. But such foreign influences also inspire new generic trajectories for artists who see such expressive cultures and touchstones for their own creative projects. In an idealistic vision of schizophonia (and one adopted by many research participants), once sound separated from source, the geographic origins of the music no longer matter and the bands that make the music belong to Bali. While a contrast between the hegemony of traditional musics and associated Hinduism and customary village life, and the counter-hegemonic indie scene and associated Western influence and frenetic urban life would provide an interesting hermeneutic symmetry, this reduction of either soundworld dissolves the lived complexity of music practice in southern Bali—as well as the very real time and place these two soundworlds share.

The city is at once the resource for the development of alternative soundworlds and conceptualized through the organized sounds that it cultivates (Krimms 2008). The sounds, however, are not independently circulating in the ether: They are produced by acting agents who assemble their musical encounters into musical and social values that

help them to make sense of this urban environment. The city is a profoundly exciting and bewildering setting. But as will be demonstrated in the following chapters, some musicians symbolize it through music as the place one holds closest: it is home. This chapter has attempted to render the indie scene visible, a world among worlds. By elevating the status of Bali's oft "hidden" (Finnegan, 1989) indie musicians so that they may find equal footing in musical Bali the value of their scene may be better appreciated in the subsequent chapters. Indie music constitutes its own sonic-social intersubjectivity, distinguishable from other, equally prevalent soundworlds in urban Bali. The musical texts that emerge from the scene are resources created and cultivated: resources for individuals to define who they are and with whom they want to belong. Engagement with music, as a social act, engenders social alliances. This chapter has demonstrated that no one is merely a passive recipient of expressive culture, and we can only take a stance on what we observe and acknowledge. To what we focus our attention will depend upon our individual agency and the cultural conditioning of each individual. This helps us to understand why a music student in the *karawitan* program at ISI may have little or no awareness that bands like Navicula or Dialog Dini Hari even exist. A lack of familiarity can also help to explain why this music would be unimportant or difficult to appreciate, to some, or captivating to others. Berger provides the example of a listener hearing an orchestra: "If she is unable to follow the melody, she may simply experience the piece as tedious and uninteresting, or as exciting and challenging, a spur to explore new musical possibilities and an icon of the world's limitless horizons" (Berger 2009, 14).

Congruent with a body of scholarship that examines music and social group formation,⁴⁰ this project makes the case that engagement with music, as a social act, engenders social alliances. Furthermore, in certain cases, such musical engagement may serve as the primary act uniting a group of otherwise socially disconnected individuals. The multiple genres—including grunge, punk, metal, indie pop, and many subgenres in between—that are broadly called *indie* appeal to a broad collective of young amateur and professional musicians, event producers, and fans who share creative aesthetics and social and professional ethics. For this small group of young people in urban Bali who struggle with self-definition through the established avenues of their home village or religion, the indie soundworld is a primary resource for them to define who they are and with whom they want to belong. The city provides the context for face-to-face interaction that facilitates this primarily orally transmitted tradition: aesthetic and social values are communicated most frequently through direct interaction. Musical engagement may serve as the primary act uniting a group of otherwise socially disconnected individuals. It is an enduring and localized musical collectivity of deep significance in this particular place.

⁴⁰ See Fonarow (2006), Holt (2007), and Wallach (2008).

Chapter 3: “Masa Kecil”¹ (Childhood): First Impressions, Firm Commitments, and Stage Beginnings

In Chapter 2, I introduced several of the individuals who have been the most committed to develop Bali’s independent music industry and scene. First encounters with internationally known bands like Nirvana, Green Day, and Rage Against the Machine inspired young teenagers in the 1990s to take up the self-study of music and, later, form some of Bali’s most critically acclaimed bands. This chapter centers on the next phase of musical exploration: when young people move from being passive receivers of popular music to active producers. It is this critical moment of commitment to producing music for a present (or imagined future) audience that moved indie music in Bali beyond being a consumer culture to becoming a sustainable music scene and supporting industry, complete with live performance venues, rehearsal and recording studios, and music distribution outlets. Before all of this can take place, young music fans must take the first step of attempting to play music together. This chapter explores those initial pathways (Finnegan 1989) that lead individuals of varying musical tastes to find common ground in music professionalism and grow a vibrant and socially fulfilling music scene. While subsequent chapters will present moments of critical reflection, during which my research interlocutors engaged in “active valuation” of core music-related practices, this chapter seeks to lay the foundation for what constitutes commonly shared forms of music-related practices, as I observed, them, which were carried out with little reflexive theorizing on their import. Such research observations enabled me to partially share in, as Blumer puts it, “how *they* see the objects, how they have acted toward the objects in a variety of different situations, and how they refer to the objects in their conversation...” (1993

¹ Song by Suicidal Sinatra, *Rock N’ Roll Not for Sale* (2010).

[1969], 51, emphasis, mine). Put differently—but still according to Blumer’s guidelines for phenomenological research on social interaction, in this chapter I remain largely in the “exploratory” mode. In exploration, the researcher forms “a close and comprehensive acquaintance with a sphere of social life that is unfamiliar and hence unknown to [her]...it is the means of developing and sharpening [her] inquiry so that [her] problem, [her] directions of inquiry, data, analytical relations, and interpretations arise out of, and remain grounded in, the empirical life under study” (ibid., 40).

The majority of the practices explored in this chapter will be familiar to someone who has started a band, with the goal of performing for an audience. Through certain of these activities, beginning with songwriting and moving to paid performances, a small number of bands move to a deeper level of scene engagement and their subjectivities shift from being amateur “hobby bands” (Dizta, interview 2009) to music professionals (Dethu, interview, 2009). Practice, here, defined in accordance with Bourdieu (1990), refers to any activity that is both actively achieved by individuals and socially informed by a historical, locational, and social context (Berger 2009, 14). Due in part to the indispensability of these initial music-making practices to the development of an individual’s musical proficiency and band’s unique sound and stage persona, research consultants rarely referred to these practices directly or reflected on their significance without coaxing. Such conventional practices exemplify Blumer’s notion of a taken for granted “joint action;” that is, an act that is “spoken of and handled without having to break it down into the separate acts that comprise it” (1993, 9). Blumer provides examples like marriage or war as actions that require coordination but are also pre-understood as concrete concepts. Joint actions are “repetitive and stable,” the building

blocks for the institutionalized knowledge of music-making that, “until further notice,” require no reflexive objectification (Berger and Luckmann 1966:24).

Though musicians may take for granted the necessity of rehearsals and performances because they share a pre-established understanding of such actions, the sociological phenomenologist may break down these individual actions and identify the steps in order to understand “the play and fate of meanings” (Blumer, 18) manifested in all social *interaction*. Each conventional practice is a necessary component of the indie scene and opportunity for practitioners to define who they are musically, and with whom they wish to work and play. Social processes are not systematic, and how individuals act will depend upon how they anticipate the actions of others and how their own actions will be interpreted. As Blumer explains, “A network or an institution does not function automatically because of some inner dynamics or system requirements; it functions because people at different points do something, and what they do is a result of how they define the situation in which they are called on to act” (Blumer 19). There is no predetermined system in place to maintain the collective value of a music scene. Individuals must make the scene happen through joint action. Furthermore, individual practices within any given collectivity will often be unpredictable and difficult to interpret because of the constantly shifting nature of attention, stance, and, ultimately, subjectivity. Individuals’ objectives within the indie music scene shift with time and social commitments are inconsistent. Identifiable joint actions, however—stabilized over time through their repetition—can guide the phenomenologist’s pursuit to understand what collective values have staying power and which stances on expressive culture embed certain behaviors of music proficiency and professionalism. This chapter will take

a closer look at the how the indie music scenes' most influential artists first started their careers as hobby bands, playing cover songs with friends.

Starting a Band

As Chapter 2 described, artists first encountered rock music most frequently through entertainment media rather than live performance. Via mail order catalogues, fanzines, domestic television programs and MTV Indonesia, radio, and pirated cassettes Bali's pioneering indie artists got their first taste of the bands that would inspire their original sound. Teenagers growing up together in the same neighborhood or attending the same schools began by experimenting with playing the instrumental parts or singing the songs by their favorite artists. Dizta, for example, frontman for electro rock band Discotion Pill, started playing rock covers with his neighborhood friends in Kuta, boys he had known most of his childhood. Marmar, vocalist for Psychopathic, first formed a punk band with high school friends in Denpasar. Rapcore band Geekssmile took shape slightly later, when Prima joined the group in 2003 to become the band's second vocalist, after meeting group founder, Yuri, in college.

All that was required to begin playing music together was an interest in the same genres or artists. Owning musical instruments, though an advantage, was not a requirement for being in a band. In fact, during the 1990s and even early 2000s, very few aspiring musicians even owned the basic equipment for a four-piece band. While guitars were fairly easy to come by, very few artists owned their own, and even fewer drummers

played their own kits.² Musical instruments—particularly the high quality, imported brands that young boys cultivated—were prohibitively expensive for most. Robi, frontman for grunge/psychedelic rock band Navicula, started playing guitar when he was 13, but did not own his own instrument until seven years later. Sorting out access to equipment was handled together by bandmates, as a group. Robi and Navicula’s lead guitarist, Dadang, would travel around Denpasar, checking in on friends in their home to find someone who could loan them instruments for rehearsals or performances. When they welcomed bassist Made to join the group, they were afforded easier access to equipment, because Made owned his own bass and guitar. Robi even joked occasionally that that was the main reason Made was welcomed into the group.

By the 2000s, guitars were more affordable and had become a common gift for young boys to receive on birthdays. Young girls, on the other hand, rarely received a guitar as a present; in fact, as shall be explored below, joining a band was not considered appropriate for girls during this time period. While a small number of young women would become singers within the indie scene, none of the well-known female artists at the time played an instrument. As in guitar-centric music scenes in the United States, gender norms impacted women’s roles within music groups and almost always assigned them the role of singer (See also Baulch 2007).

For the young boys who took up the guitar, however, the instrument symbolized their shift into a soundworld of genres dominated by the instrument. Blumer notes humans experience objects in the world by assigning them to three general categories: “(a) physical objects, such as chairs, trees, or bicycles; (b) social objects such as students,

² Baulch observes in her study that in the 1990s, metal drummers often shared a single kit for rehearsals (2007).

priests, a president, a mother, or a friend; and (c) abstract objects, such as moral principles, philosophical doctrines, or ideas such as justice, exploitation, or compassion.”(1993 [1964], 10-11). Each object is assigned its value according to the meaning that object has for the person who encounters it. For the majority of young musicians, the guitar—even if it was not physically owned by its player, and even if the beholder would move on to play a different instrument—symbolized a commitment to becoming a music producer rather than passive receiver.

The lucky few aspiring musicians who were able to acquire access to the full range of instruments in a standard rock band lineup—at minimum, a guitar (preferably electric) and amplifier, drum kit, and electric bass—could begin experimenting with playing the music of the artists they idolized. Most drummers continued to play on borrowed kits throughout their careers, at most acquiring a drum key for tuning, high quality crash cymbal and perhaps a snare drum that could easily be brought to gigs by motorbike. Due to its prohibitively high cost and large size very few drummers owned an entire drum kit. The location of a borrowed kit, therefore, was a key component determining where rehearsals could take place.

The formative years playing music together in middle and high school were largely devoted to self-education. Musicians listened repeatedly to recordings of the bands that they idolized, researched their individual biographies and personal influences, and tried to recreate their basic compositions, learned by rote. Often older friends or relatives who could already play an instrument would provide some guidance. Robi described hanging out at the *poskamling*, an outdoor security post in his neighborhood or at a nearby rehearsal studio in order to learn from older neighbors who had already

started their own bands. With the luxury of leisure time and little responsibility, high school boys could dedicate hours after school to their newfound hobby of learning music.

The time period in which the Navicula and Superman Is Dead's band members first began playing together is significant because the bands that formed their primary influences were easy to emulate. Just as in the United States, where the number of garage bands surged following the success of grunge bands like Nirvana and pop punk bands like Green Day, fans of these styles of music enjoyed quick success picking up the simple chord progressions or melodic patterns within these musical styles. This music appealed, in part, because it was easy to play. Quick comprehension can yield a quick sense of ownership over the music and fast gratification for mastering a musical style. Robi describes the passion for creating a band that this sense of familiarity can create: "I'd go home, play guitar in my room, and try to find all the chords for the bands that I liked, until I could do it. I wasn't yet creating my own songs, just repeating what they played. Just, just imagine...me, them...in that way. And it became an obsession, at that time, until, you know, I had no girlfriend at the time. I just wanted to make a band. It's like that" (Robi, interview, 2009).³ Despite the thousands of miles separating Nirvana and Navicula or Green Day and Superman Is Dead, the affinity these young musicians felt for this music from a far-flung elsewhere forged a musical intimacy—though unidirectional—that subverted a sense of great distance.

As one finds in many band cultures worldwide, the first configuration of almost every young band in Bali is that of a cover band: Musicians hone their craft by playing

³ "Pergi pulang ke rumah, main gitar di kamar, dan cari *all* chord yang band-band yang saya suka, sampe semuanya bisa. Belum buat lagu sendiri, hanya mengulang apa yang mereka mainkan. *Just, just imagine, that I err*, aku mereka itu. Dan, saking obsesinya, waktu itu saya sampe, *you know, have no girlfriend*, gak punya pacar, *just I want to make a band, it's like that*."

songs by their favorite acts. Even the most nationally acclaimed acts cut their teeth on songs by their idols: Superman Is Dead, for example, played their first live gigs paying homage to Green Day, while Navicula covered the best of Seattle Sound. Geekssmile's original members, following the local trend of their day, also started out covering Green Day songs, but they found a better stylistic fit with Rage Against the Machine. Dizta Discotion Pill's first band played Bad Religion covers, for example, while Marmar's first rock band covered artists as stylistically removed as American pop punk band Blink 182 and Indonesian rock band Jamrud.

Starting one's musical explorations as a player rather than receiver often begins with imitating others—whether we are referring to a child taking her first piano lesson with a teacher or teenaged boys emulating their rock heroes in a cover band. In Indonesia Luvaas's research interlocutors also described this period of devoted imitation, prior to attempting to write original compositions. David Tarigan, who founded the now defunct indie record label Aksara Records, described his youth experiences with cover bands to Luvaas: “There were a lot of cover bands at first, David recalls. Bands developed their chops replicating the sounds of prominent grunge, punk, and metal groups they heard on the newly christened MTV Indonesia or discovered through cassettes passed hand-to-hand among friends. Then, as their skill and confidence improved, these bands began playing their own songs, mostly fast, aggressive, and simple” (2012, Loc. 3619). In casual conversations and formal interviews, artists often reminisced about the early days playing covers with little or no embarrassment, for as Baulch also documents, this period of mastering the “classics” was an important rite of passage for artists who wanted to

move on to write their own music. (Baulch 2007, 62).⁴ Furthermore, those who skillfully perform familiar songs can earn the respect and admiration of other musicians and fans and may even carry such covers into their performance rundown in later years, as music critic Rudolf Dethu pointed out to me (interview, 2010). Navicula, for example, continues to cover Pearl Jam's "Alive," particularly when they join grunge music festivals or play for an audience composed of formal grunge communities in Java and Jakarta. As is common among musicians in other settings, senior artists may also write their own arrangements of songs they played for the first time as teenagers, and young adults. Navicula guitarist and Dialog Dini Hari frontman Dadang, for example, has been performing his own arrangement of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' In the Wind" for many years. The song is always popular among audiences in live performance. Many artists covered Indonesia's best known folk song by Iwan Fals: "Bento," a witty critique of gluttonous affluence in Indonesia elicits spirited audience response and singing along whenever it was performed live. As they recalled this early period of music study, the young musicians who would, in fact, go on to write their own songs acknowledged the pedagogic value of imitating their favorite artists in order to learn how to play their instruments and compose within the basic parameters of the pop song. They also enjoyed the euphoria of performing well-known music that would elicit enthusiastic audience response in live performance.

During these early years, every band underwent personnel changes and experimented with various styles of music—by emulating artists from various genres—before settling into the genres that would form the basis of their individual styles.

⁴ Baulch writes that in the 1990s, the cover band was a "vehicle for skill enhancement and...a rite of passage for newly formed groups...[T]he scene operated as a training ground in which beginners, supervised by their elders, could progressively attain authenticity by playing in cover bands" (2007, 62).

Discotion Pill, for example started out with a strong interest in punk, which evolved into pop and finally electro-rock. Psychopathic first played classic Indonesian rock songs and British punk before moving on to the New York hardcore that would shape their original compositions. Prima Geekssmile explained the band's music in the following way: "The base for our music is Rage Against The Machine. That is our base. So even though we have other influences like Slayer and other hardcore bands, our basic music is Rage Against The Machine. Maybe it's Morello's guitar playing or rapping or screaming like him, and we still maintain that" (Prima, interview, 2009).⁵ In our interview together, Dethu described this as a natural part of "growing up" as a musician: "Because it happens like this: So if there is another festival, they reshape their band so that they can take part in that festival. And there's nothing wrong with that, if we look at their age...and that's really normal, because they're still looking for their soulmates" (Dethu, interview, 2009).⁶

Attachment to these early influences was often quite strong and shaped the subjectivities of bands as they moved on to performing for live audiences. Thus, Navicula's grunge roots would continue to be important to the band member's identities throughout their careers, and Indonesia's grunge communities would continue to support them in live performance, despite the fact that they moved to more experimental, technically complex, and melodic compositional styles. The older, more experienced Navicula displayed evolving interests in the instrumental virtuosity of classic rock like

⁵ "Tapi ya *basic* dari musik kami ya Rage Against The Machine gitu. Itu *basic* kami. Jadi walaupun kami punya *influence-influence* lain seperti Slayer atau band-band hardcore lainnya, tapi *basic* musik kami ya seperti Rage Against The Machine itu ya. Mungkin gitar-gitarnya Morelo atau *rapping* atau *screaming* nya itu masih tetap kita pertahankan gitu."

⁶ "Karena kejadiannya emang seperti itu. Jadi, ketika ada festival lain, dia bikin bentuk baru untuk mengikuti festival itu. Dan itu sama sekali tidak salah kalau melihat umur mereka...Dan itu memang wajar, mereka mencari, mencari *soulmate* mereka untuk membentuk sebuah band, kan."

extended guitar and drum solos on the one hand, as well as in pop music's short song format, catchy riffs and polished vocals. Grunge, however, remains the band's "first love" (*cinta pertama*), as Robi explained, and its influence is still audible in the majority of the band's compositions (Robi, interview, 2009).

Of course, artists may have many reasons for consciously selecting their early musical influences. Jerinx, drummer for SID, claimed in our interview in 2009 that the band chose to emulate Green Day because it was such a popular band in Indonesia at that time, and they knew that they could build a significant fan base. Once moving on from playing Green Day covers, SID carried their California pop punk fashion and compositional style into their performances and original songs (Jerinx, interview, 2009). There is also a notable push and pull to artists' relationships with their early influences. While SID or Navicula may speak with pride about their respective punk and grunge roots, like most bands, they also prefer not to be pigeonholed by a genre classification that is too specific. Thus, though it was common for artists to name bands that influenced their styles, naming genres to which they belonged was not as comfortable to the bands. This could be observed in how they spoke about their influences in casual conversation and media interviews, as well as in how they crafted their official bios on their websites and social media profiles.

Dethu, who is well respected in the indie scene both for his writing and for guiding SID and Navicula early in their careers as their band manager, has served as an informal advisor for several bands in Bali. He often stresses the importance being able to clearly describe one's sound, but of also developing a "signature style" as a band—in terms of fashion, band member personas, instrumentation, and songwriting. Dethu argued

that bands that want to continue to build an audience and earn critical respect need to stand out from the crowd (Dethu, interview, 2010). Many bands have taken Dethu's advice and tended to move away from defining their style with reference to other bands. It is also true, however, that absorbing new musical influences and evolving one's musical style is also an organic part of making music for an extended period of time. Furthermore, each band member adds his personal influences to the group, as Robi Navicula described with regards to Navicula's drummer, who also plays *kendang*, the double headed drum in gamelan: "Gembull as a gamelan player who likes everything; definitely that will give [the band] a certain color. But then already each individual has his own unique taste, which joins together in the music. They will each contribute their own color into Navicula as a canvas. And then we have our own color" (Robi, interview, 2009).⁷

In our interview together in 2010, Scared of Bums, who had already been playing together for several years, identified their specific influences through individual members of the band: Arix, the bassist and backing vocalist was into hardcore, while drummer Nova preferred the melodic punk sound of NOFX. Guitarist Poglax was into hard rock and metal bands like Metallica, Halloween, and Mr. Big. The combination of these influences gave them a unique and personal sound. By 2014 Yuri, Geekssmile's MC, had left the group and Geekssmile moved away from rap-rock and gave their experimental guitarist Bayak more room to interject extended and heavily distorted guitar solos into their performances that were a nod to noise rock and distant from the band's RATM roots.

⁷ "Gembull dari pemain gamelan suka apa semua, pasti akan memberi warna. Tapi kalau sudah semua individu ini, yang punya selera unik, gabung dalam satu musik, mereka akan memberi, *contribute their own color into...Navicula is a canvas. And we have our own color, it's like....* oh jadi ini, *this is Navicula.*

The bands profiled thus far were among the most popular artists in Bali during the majority of my time in Indonesia. They also share in common roots in rock music and preference for a full electric format with amplified and often distorted electric guitars. A number of these rock musicians also experimented with acoustic formats, including creating new arrangements for “unplugged” shows. In fact, Navicula’s 2007 album *Beautiful Rebel* features an acoustic track with guitarist Dadang performing vocals, titled “Together in Today,” and in 2009, Navicula took their acoustic act on the road, adding several acoustic arrangements to their set list for performances in Jakarta.

While even in the early 2000s bands occasionally performed acoustic, it was not until the rise in popularity of folk trio Dialog Dini Hari (DDH) that the acoustic format became a local trend. Navicula’s lead guitarist Dadang formed DDH together with bassist and singer Ian Joshua Stevenson and session drummer Mark Liepmann, who also had an alternative rock project together, Kaimsasikun. Working together with lyricist Igo Blado for their debut album, *Beranda Taman Hati*, released in 2008, DDH was one of the first folk/blues act playing in an acoustic format to emerge from a predominantly full electric (*full listrik*) music scene. Another trio, Nosstress, followed in 2009 and together the two bands have inspired other acts to experiment with various acoustic formats.

In addition to forgoing the electric guitar for a hollow-body acoustic guitar or dobro, Dialog Dini Hari also stripped down the full drum kit to a snare, bass drum, and high hat or, in later years, switched out the drum kit for a *cajón*. In fact, this Afro-Peruvian box drum gained wide popularity in Bali beginning in 2009, when Navicula’s drummer Gembull performed the instrument during an acoustic show. During their 2009 Jakarta tour, Navicula welcomed a guest musician, Dutch composer and musician Raoul

Wijffels, who is co-founder of the Bali-based music education non-profit One Dollar For Music, to perform accordion with the group. During rehearsals, Wijffels showed the band the *cajón*, and Gembull and Robi worked together with Wijffels to construct a new, slightly larger instrument to accommodate Gembull's large frame for live performances. Gembull described being instantly attracted to the buzzing timbre created by stretching cords against the struck front surface of the box. A buzzing timbre is an aesthetic common to many parts of Africa, but unusual in Indonesia. The timbre's divergence from that of more common percussion instruments in Indonesia helped to give Navicula, in its acoustic format, a unique sound in the local context.

Within months, a number of bands began incorporating mass-manufactured or homemade *cajón* in their acoustic performances. The speed with which the *cajón* replaced other percussion instruments in acoustic performances revealed two important points: Firstly, the *cajón* was much more convenient to carry to rehearsals and performances (it could even be brought by motorbike, most musicians' preferred mode of transportation). Secondly, it demonstrated Navicula's significant influence on the music scene. Gembull explained he appreciated the convenience of transporting this lightweight instrument, and he also enjoyed the *cajón*'s signature buzzing sound. Instrumentation is often a means for artists to move beyond the standard vocals-guitar-bass-drum kit format to embrace new sounds. Discotion Pill, for example, employs sampling, a sequencer, laptop, mixer, and controller, in addition to live vocals, guitar, and drums.

Pedagogy and Playing Together

Artists like Marmar, Gembull, and Nova, who have all played gamelan in their home villages, are familiar with the typical settings for learning traditional Balinese music. These may include studying in a *sanggar* or study group, often in public gathering spaces like a *wantilan* or *bale banjar*, a neighborhood's open-air meeting platform. An ensemble leader teaches the players their parts by rote; playing technique, technical development, and performer deportment are all memorized by imitating an ensemble leader or other senior players. Learning to play gamelan is a collective experience often performed in public, which proceeds under the directorship of identified leaders.

By contrast, a young person interested in learning guitar, drum, or bass—the essential instruments in most first bands—is almost always self-taught. There were a few exceptions: Nurdi Geekssmile studied drums formally and is one of a small number of musicians who can read written standard notation. Psychopathic's guitarist, who returned to Bali after studying classical guitar in college in Jakarta, carried his formal education over to band rehearsals, during which he taught other members some of the principals of guitar playing and song composition. Furthermore, music schools like Lembaga Pendidikan Musik Farabi (Farabi Music Education Institution) in Denpasar, which offer formal instruction in classical western instruments like piano and violin, as well as the drum kit and electric guitar, are increasingly popular with middle-class parents who can afford to enroll their children in studies with professional and formally trained musicians.

Most of the musicians I interviewed, however, began their “studies” at home, listening to audio recordings by their favorite performers and imitating the songs until

they could commit them to memory through voice or instrument. Once individuals begin playing together, each musician continues to be responsible for mastering his own part at home before joining the group, rather than learning under the watchful eye of an instructor. While the pedagogical principle of learning by rote is the same among gamelan players and indie musicians—and while both require group rehearsal—indie musicians begin their studies in isolation and without a designated teacher. A commitment to independent study informs an ideal of individual creativity (Fonarow 2006, 43), shared by participants in the indie scene. Guitarists, drummers, and vocalists must all make time to work on their craft individually. Furthermore, if there is a principal lyricist or songwriter in the band—this was the case with Robi Navicula, Prima Geekssmile, Marmar Psychopathic, and Dadang Dialog Dini Hari—he will complete most of his songwriting separated from the group.

While the occasional impromptu street side jam session may well satisfy the majority of young boys interested in playing music together, those with aspirations to play for an audience one day will need to seek a more formal rehearsal setting with access to a drum kit. Many band rehearsals take place in the family compound of a band member whose accommodating parents do not mind the noise. Home-based rehearsals, occurring as they do in a relaxed and familiar atmosphere, remain almost as casual and conducive to socializing as the street-side jam session; and participants value the opportunity to hang out (*nongkrong*) as much as the chance to rehearse. Band mates may pass the better part of a day chatting, drinking *kopi tubruk*,⁸ smoking *kretek*,⁹ and eating

⁸ *Kopi tubruk* refers to the Indonesian style of brewing pre-roasted and finely ground coffee. The grounds are combined with a heaping spoonful of sugar and boiling water in a glass and stirred, creating a strong, thick coffee similar to Turkish coffee.

*nasi bungkus*¹⁰ before they get around to the task of working out their respective parts as a music group. Time spent socializing is not devoid of music-making, however: While hanging out, bands listen repeatedly to recordings of songs they plan to perform. Drummers practice their licks, drumsticks in hand, striking nearby chairs, plastic crates, and tabletops. Guitarists strum their acoustic or unplugged instruments while gathered together with friends on *bale*¹¹ or front stoops. As the afternoon transitions to evening, *arak*,¹² *tuak*,¹³ or Bintang beer may replace coffee as the beverage of choice, and the insouciant vibe of the home-based rehearsal allows the band and accompanying friends, wives, girlfriends, and family members to carry on a range of conversations under the guise of a band rehearsal. Collective focus moves toward and away from music-making; in a home-based rehearsal setting, the musical work often plays second fiddle to the social work of *nongkrong*, hanging out.

In order to more clearly demarcate the rehearsal space and avoid disturbing the neighbors, some musicians have created home-based rehearsal spaces, complete with a drum kit and wall insulation. Between 2008 and 2011, Edward Andrews, an Australian expatriate, music teacher, and frontman for rock band Balian, often hosted Navicula in his home studio, as did DDH's former bassist, Ian. Home-based rehearsals are not ideal for all bands, however, particularly those who desire a more time-efficient rehearsal

⁹ Clove cigarettes, which are popular throughout Indonesia. The clove tree is native to the Maluku Islands in Indonesia and is now cloves are commercially harvested in Java and other regions in Indonesia.

¹⁰ Takeaway rice packaged in banana leaves or brown paper, served with mixed vegetables, meat and *sambal* (chili sauce). *Nasi bungkus* can be purchased from a *kaki lima*, a mobile food stand, or a *warung*, a roadside eatery.

¹¹ An open-air pavilion, similar to a gazebo and a common feature within Balinese family compounds or neighborhood meeting places (called a *bale banjar*).

¹² A highly alcoholic beverage made from distilled palm sap.

¹³ An alcoholic beverage made from fermented rice, yeast, and sugar. Both *arak* and *tuak* are frequently home-brewed and can be purchased directly from brewers or local street vendors. Factory-brewed *arak* is also available for sale in grocery and convenience stores.

focused primarily on music-making. Furthermore, bands playing the harder genres of non-mainstream rock cannot, for the most part, rehearse at home, for fear of disturbing their families and neighbors. Many bands opted to rent out commercial rehearsal spaces, provided indoors, in soundproof and air conditioned studio rooms. Bands can choose from dozens of rehearsal studios in southern Bali that, throughout the 2000s, were as cheap as 30,000 rupiah (\$3.00, US) per hour. Low-end rehearsal spaces provide only the minimal requirements for band rehearsals: generally no more than one or two voice microphones and stands, a drum kit, a low quality amplifier, and pair of speakers. Few studios provide a soundproof space. Rustic wall paneling in the form of propped upright mattresses or seat cushions nailed to the walls provide some soundproofing, but more as a means to avoid disturbing neighbors than to dampen resonance within the rehearsal space.

The national franchise Farabi in Denpasar provides the most elaborate and expensive rehearsal rooms for rent. Large rehearsal rooms come complete with high-end amplifiers, speakers, and cables; several microphones and stands; a mixing board; and additional instruments, including supplementary percussion for drum kits and baby grand pianos, all housed within a soundproofed and air conditioned space. Senior bands or band members who are also students or teachers at Farabi's music school may, on occasion, rent Farabi's rehearsal spaces. But while most amateur and professional artists acknowledge the school's high quality equipment and ideal rehearsal atmosphere, they concede that the difficulty of booking the high-demand rooms, as well as Farabi's high rental rate, lead them to select cheaper rehearsal space options.

In the following section I will move away from specific bands and zoom out to look at the typical actions that take place within rehearsals. Across the many rehearsals that I attended several patterns of interaction—and valuation of that interaction—emerged. On the day of a scheduled rehearsal, the bandleader—usually the vocalist—or manager will check in early to the rehearsal space and wait for the rest of the band to arrive, usually while smoking and drinking coffee in front of the studio entrance and chatting with other clients and the studio staff. Few bands will start a rehearsal on time. Most band managers and personnel I interviewed complained about the difficulty of coercing everyone to arrive on time for rehearsal, and within almost every band, one musician had a reputation for consistently keeping everyone else waiting. Starting a few minutes late is not a cause for distress. Extreme tardiness, however, led to rehearsal cancellations and, often, wasted money. While some studios allow flexible start and end times, others, like Farabi, enforce exact booking times. If a band's rehearsal carries over into the next hour, they will be charged an extra hour's fee.

Rather than being a source of significant frustration, however, tardiness usually became a resource for lighthearted jests at the latecomer's expense. My consultants were rarely overtly angry about being kept waiting. Most accepted a flexible sense of timeliness as an Indonesian temporal reality and even source of cultural distinction. Indonesian temporality has a name in the Indonesian language: *jam karet* (rubber time). The Indonesian acknowledgement of clock time is much less rigid, compared to American or European temporality. Whereas I, as an American researcher, interpreted a late start time as “tardiness” and even a cause for aggravation—a waste of *time*—Indonesian interlocutors took *jam karet* for granted as a fact of life and opportunity to

hang out (*nongkrong*) and conduct other worthwhile social and professional conversations. Tardiness was measured, therefore, not by whether or not a rehearsal scheduled for noon actually started at one o'clock, but rather by whether or not the rehearsal was cancelled because the waiting band members had to depart for other appointments or responsibilities.

Full band rehearsals can also provide an opportunity for *group composing*. Rock bands rarely rely on a single band member to compose an entire song, including each of the instrumental sections. While a vocalist or bandleader often arrives to rehearsal with a rough idea for a melody and/or chord progression, and perhaps exploratory lyrical content, fleshing out a composition is most often a group effort. Gathered together in rehearsal, each player adds his input on the overall composition, based on his expertise on his particular instrument or vocal part. The final result is truly a collaborative effort.

A composition rehearsal usually proceeds in the following manner: the bandleader or artist who presents the initial song idea demonstrates the short melody or chord progression he has prepared, usually on the guitar. He may additionally hum or sing basic *filler lyrics*—a string of meaningless phrases or *vocables* used to construct the vocalist's melody that will inevitably be replaced by more meaningful lyrics—over the guitar line. The drummer will join in with his basic supporting rhythm line, as will the bassist. If the band features a lead guitarist, he will either pick up the main chord progression or begin experimenting with an ornamented version of the melody. Through trial and error, and likely more than one rehearsal meeting, the group will collectively agree upon the shape of the final composition, making room for instrumental solos and helping to flesh out the lyrics. While the compositional dynamics vary from one band to the next, depending

upon the skills or interest in composition of each member, *collective*, rather than solo composition is, as a rule, the norm. With few exceptions, most songs composed by bands at the center of this study followed the typical pop song structure of strophic form including verses, choruses, a bridge, refrain, and unforgettable hook.

Composing individual lines proceeds heuristically: With instruments in hand, players execute variations of their particular part, adopting new musical ideas and abandoning others as the rehearsal proceeds. Players incorporate minimal verbal description and no written notation to communicate their ideas: With the exception of musicians who completed a formal western music curriculum at Farabi or another, smaller music school, Bali-based musicians do not read standard staff or tablature notation. Since they are mostly self-taught, they also lack the specialist vocabulary to describe the song form, aesthetic tropes, and instrumentation common to most indie bands in Bali. Of course, a limited musical vocabulary is not unique to Bali; indie musicians in the United States, for example, also rarely complete formal music education, and therefore also depend on heuristic rehearsal practices. Players take turns experimenting with their individual lines until they are satisfied with an approximate final version. Then they will play their line repeatedly to commit it to memory, making final modifications as desired. In this fashion, musicians work together to shape the final composition through the group rehearsal. Lacking the technical language to refer to the components of a composition with any specificity, resourceful musicians find other alternatives: Where the faculty for written or verbal description is limited, the instrument or voice becomes the primary medium for communicating a musical idea.

The time commitment required for composing individual instrumental lines generally depends upon a) the complexity of the line and b) the skill level and experience of individual players. The bass line is generally the simplest and most quickly adapted line; it usually consists of a succession of the lowest notes, most frequently supporting the harmonic progression of a composition. But technical adeptness may allow for an elaboration of this primarily supporting role and even for predetermined solos.

Most musicians I interviewed concur that lyric writing is the most time-consuming task within composition—and for some, the most cumbersome. Rather than drudge through the process on their own, however, some artists prefer to draw from a talent pool of lyricists in Bali. Lakota Moira, Navicula's manager, is a talented lyricist and native English speaker who often composes the band's English-language song lyrics. Igo Blado, music producer, event organizer, and former guitarist and lyricist for the now defunct bands Telephone and Ed Eddy & Residivis, was instrumental in conceptualizing and composing the lyrics for several songs on Dialog Dini Hari's debut album, *Beranda Taman Hati* (2009). The importance of well-crafted lyrics—judged according to their topic, poetic engagement, and appropriateness in full song arrangement—will vary from one band to the next, according to genre standards and individual band's taste. Generally, however, musicians agree that a talented lyricist can significantly improve the quality and impact of a new composition.

Song writing, like instrumentation and genre affiliation, is an important way that bands construct their public subjectivities. Bands tend to earn their reputations through popular singles, or “hits,” and while the hits may not earn top choice among media critics, these are the songs that fans most often request, receive the most airplay on radio,

and most significantly shape a band's songwriting reputation. Thus, Navicula's environmental activism is personified in their popular hit "Kali Mati" (Dead River, *Alkemis*, 2005) about river pollution, while Nymphaea "Malaikatmu" (Your Angel, *Malaikatmu*, 2008) submits a mild feminism through a simple ballad sung from the perspective of a woman who refuses to act as "angel" for her male partner. Discotion Pill acquired a reputation for writing EDM-inspired "party" songs with hits like "Shock Me" (*Universound*, 2010) while Geekssmile's "Black Blood Green Thunder" (*Upeti untuk Macan Indonesia*, 2010) popularized the band's image as smart political dissidents.

Within a rehearsal, artists not only build up and integrate the instrumental and vocal components that will form a new composition: they may also tear down and completely transform an existing piece. Any aspect of a fully composed song—the lyrics, melody, harmonic progression, riffs, bridge, solos, tempo, and key—can change during a full band rehearsal. I have observed a song transform from a classic rock anthem into a radio-friendly pop ballad in the course of an afternoon rehearsal. While reasons for changing a song vary, bands generally choose to revamp one of their popular singles in order to breathe new life into a song that will feature in an upcoming performance. Navicula, for example, have composed two versions of the song "Overkonsumsi" (Overconsumption) from their 2009 album *Alkemis* (The Alchemist). The original is a grunge-infused rock rendition, while the new version is country-influenced, up-tempo, and lighthearted. They transformed the song after being invited to perform for a special event at *Rolling Stone Indonesia* headquarters in Jakarta, featuring guest pop vocalist Oppie Andaresta in 2010. Robi commented that he was pleased the new version earned

the band broader audience appeal, and they adopted the new arrangement into their acoustic set list.

For young and amateur bands, the rehearsal is an opportunity to confirm a song's final version, from which they deviate minimally in live performance or during a recording session. Senior, professional bands, however, treat the original composition created in rehearsal as a framework, upon which they will continue to make adjustments, as long as the song is a part of their set repertoire for live performance. A significant amount of group and individual rehearsals are dedicated to working out “improvised” solos for recording and live performance. Solos provide opportunities to exhibit technical virtuosity. But while most audience members with whom I spoke take for granted that instrumental solos are spontaneous, improvised interludes, they are actually most often thoroughly rehearsed prior to performance.

In addition to composition rehearsals, bands schedule rehearsals in order to prepare for live performances, recording sessions, and road tours. Rehearsals for live events and tours generally focus on set lists—song order during performance—and the repetition of selected songs, while recording rehearsals focus on a single song to be recorded at the next recording session. In the final rehearsal before a performance or tour, the road manager or bandleader plays a central part. She will discuss travel and accommodation logistics, equipment needs, and itineraries. Bands that employ a *soundman*—an engineer who co-manages with a venue or production companies mixing engineer the sound mixer during live events—may be invited to attend the final rehearsal or, at minimum, the sound check on site for a live performance, to discuss mixing levels.

As joint action, the rehearsal is an indispensable practice for Bali's indie bands. The rehearsal marks the transition from informal, hobby jam sessions on street curbs and in family compounds to rehearsals with the end goal of performing in front of an audience. Prior to the first rehearsal, musicians may have little intention of playing regularly with the same personnel or performing for a live audience. The rehearsal is a passage to forming the identity of a group. Having committed to it, individual players will also commit to finalizing personnel, experimenting with their generic boundaries, and settling upon a name.

The band name formalizes the group's commitment to making music together. The reasons artists choose particular names varies as much as the styles of music performed: Navicula, for example, stumbled upon their unusual name, which describes a boat-shaped algae and means "small ship," in an encyclopedia. Superman Is Dead brought down a global hero by selecting their name: They claim that the idea behind their name is that no one is invincible. Geekssmile adopted its name from founding members who are no longer part of the group and generally agree that it is a terrible name, but it is too late to change it. Scared of Bums pulled their name from the lyrics of a NOFX song, one of the band's most important influences. However they have also developed a philosophy around the name that one must work hard to achieve one's dreams, rather than ask for handouts. By this, they refer not to actual beggars (*pengemis*), but to the idea that some artists wait for inspiration from others rather than finding it within themselves. Nova, the band's drummer explains, "We don't mean poor in terms of possession but poor in terms of creativity, too" (Nova, interview, 2011).¹⁴

¹⁴"Gembel tuh bukan berarti miskin harta tapi miskin kreatif, juga."

Taking to the Stage

Performance contexts for indie musicians include large-scale, open-air events including a temporarily erected stage and full sound amplification. Popular outdoor events have included annual band festivals, motorcycle rallies, neighborhood bazaars, bicycle fun rides, *konser amal* (benefit concerts) to raise awareness (and, sometimes, funds) for a social or environmental cause, and university celebrations, often honoring a graduating class or faculty/department anniversary. Bands like Discotion Pill and Scared of Bums have performed for store openings at shopping centers and promotional events for motorcycle brands, while bands like Geekssmile, Dialog Dini Hari, and Navicula have all performed for multimedia art events like painting exhibitions, book launches, and poetry readings. In some of these contexts, multiple soundworlds intersect; gamelan or traditional dance, for example, may also feature as a formal opening and visual and auditory reminders of the “Balineseness” of the event. Generally speaking, however, traditional Balinese music was not a necessary presence in music events featuring bands.

In the 1990s, Baulch observed that bands playing underground genres such as punk, death metal, or grunge were rarely able to secure paid gigs at tourist bars and hotels (2007, 60), where top-40 or reggae bands most frequently composed live band entertainment. Therefore, most rock bands performing original songs were relegated to performing gigs within their local *banjar*, for neighborhood fundraisers or celebrations like weddings and birthdays. Local underground musicians helped to establish festivals and weekly outdoor music events: In 1996, Moel, frontman for “ethnic lunatic” metal band Eternal Madness, organized and produced a punk and black metal festival called Total Uyut, while one year later, Superman is Dead launched a festival called

Independent Productions (Baulch 2007, 157). In general, however, performance opportunities were scarce and no local underground artists were paid to perform.

Following the 2002 bombings and a dramatic drop in foreign tourism, local venues struggled to attract enough patrons to stay in business. Many venue owners set their sights on the domestic tourism market, a primary focus for Dinas Pariwisata Bali, the Bali's Tourism Board, in its tourism revitalization program, as well as local, middle class Balinese. Bali's bands found many new opportunities to perform at indoor music venues than they had in the past.¹⁵ One exceptional venue that hosted local bands just prior to the bombings was Hard Rock Café in Kuta. Stuart Wilford, a British expatriate and founder of *The Beat*, a biweekly free entertainment magazine, as well as *The Beat Radio*, was an early media supporter for Bali's rock scene. In 2002, Stuart partnered with Dethu to organize *The Beat Rock Fest* at Hard Rock Café, one of Bali's largest rock concerts at that time—and the first to feature in a district catering primarily to tourists. Ipong, a Jakarta native, music promoter, and venue manager, was in charge of booking talent for Hard Rock Café at the time. She was also a close friend of Dethu and was responsible for agreeing to allow *The Beat Rock Fest* to take place at Hard Rock, making the venue the first to welcome local bands to play original songs. Ipong established a legacy for Hard Rock Café Bali as a choice venue for large, indoor rock music events throughout the 2000s. After Ipong returned to Jakarta, however, her successor, who was less informed about local rock music, rarely staged local bands at the venue.

By the time I returned to Bali in 2008, the volume of regular gigs was astonishing. One could literally attend a performance by a local band every week, and during the cool

¹⁵ See "Live Music Venues" in the research blog for a map locating predominant venues for live performance between 2008 and 2014 (<http://baliunderground.com/live-music-venues/>).

and dry windy season, gigs took place nearly everyday. In 2011, I began writing a nightlife column for entertainment and travel magazines *Hello Bali* and *Jakarta Java Kini*. I often dedicated these articles to covering the wide variety of indie gigs. In my six years living in Indonesia, I attended well over 300 performances featuring the bands at the center of this study—the vast majority took place in their home territory in Bali. While initially, gigging opportunities appeared to be spatially scattered and unpredictable, I was eventually able to map the most frequent sites for live indie music performance.¹⁶ Settings for live performance included both indoor venues, such as restaurants, bars, and nightclubs; as well as outdoor, public spaces where festivals and large-scale concerts were held, such as public beaches and soccer fields. Most gigs took place in Denpasar and the nearby neighborhood or Sanur. The volume of live music venues in the bustling tourist areas of Tuban, Kuta, Legian, and Seminyak, as well as the quickly developing westernmost outskirts of Badung, Kerobokan and Canggu, also attracted many senior bands for gigs catering to a domestic and foreign tourist and expatriate audience. Sub-scenes developed around particular bars and bands, based loosely upon neighborhoods. Kuta, for example, Jerinx's hometown and the location of his long-running music venue Twice Bar, was the main stomping grounds for SID, Suicidal Sinatra, The Hydrant. Bands Scared of Bums, Nymphaea, and Geekssmile, as well as the majority of death metal acts like Trojan and Parau tended to gig more frequently in Denpasar. While all of these artists knew each other and often performed together for large-scale music events, some artists crossed paths more frequently than others, thus cultivated social camaraderie and working relationships according to identifiable home territories.

¹⁶ See <http://baliunderground.com/live-music-venues/>.

By 2014, several venues had earned positive reputations in the music scene, either because of the quality of sound and stage equipment or because they extended payment to performing artists (*fee band*): Mantra, for example, owned by Tipi Jabrik, surfing legend and the brother of famous Indonesian actress Luna Maya, located on the bustling Jalan Petitenget in Seminyak, a region just north of Kuta, had become a popular alternative for domestic and foreign tourists interested in a slightly “higher brow” clubbing scene than Kuta’s. Mantra is surrounded by other long-standing music venues, but is distinct from its neighbors for welcoming local bands like Navicula and Dialog Dini Hari, as well as national touring rock acts like Bandung’s The S.I.G.I.T. to perform. Dues Ex Machina Temple of Enthusiasm, a surf shop, bar/restaurant, and live music venue opened by the Australian motorcycle and custom surf brand of the same name, is located deep in Canggu near Echo Beach, a more than 45-minute drive from southern Denpasar. Its sizeable outdoor stage, grassy audience viewing area, and set fee standard, however—Deus extends the same payment to local and foreign acts alike has made it a mainstay for regular gigs by bands like Dialog Dini Hari, The Hydrant, and Gede Robi (Robi Navicula in his solo format).

Outdoor events were also quite common in the 2000s. University sponsored events organized by a *fakultas* (department) from Udayana University, for example, most frequently utilized campus parking lots, public soccer fields, or, occasionally, the Arts Center in Denpasar to celebrate their anniversary with a live concert. Generally, a committee of students would hire an event organizer to assist in choosing and booking a venue, hiring bands, renting stage equipment, inviting vendors to sell food and drinks, and securing sponsors (who also promoted and sold their wares at the event). One of the

most popular annual faculty events was a daylong metal festival organized by the Technical Faculty called GRANAT. The event has featured most of Bali's metal acts throughout the year, as well as headliners from Jakarta and Bandung. Burgerkill and Seringai, Indonesia's top two metal acts, have both performed at GRANAT.

Another outdoor event that lasted a decade before being cancelled in 2013 was Kuta Karnival, an annual festival established by Dinas Pariwisata following the 2002 bombings, in order to attract locals and domestic tourists to Kuta for a beachside event culinary bazaar, live music, surfing and paddling competitions, exhibitions, and other games and activities for families. Similarly, beginning in 2006, the Sanur Development Foundation (Yayasan Pembangunan Sanur) established the Sanur Village Festival. While the festival's climax is an annual kite festival, the multi-day festival also features live music by local bands.

In 2007 and 2008, Bagus Mantra, owner of Pregina Enterprise and music producer for several pop Bali and fusion bands (groups that blended the rock band format with traditional Balinese music) staged the Bali Jam Fest, a two-day affair featuring performances by pop Bali, hard rock, and indie bands. Although Jam Fest, which was held at the enormous GOR Ngurah Rai (the Ngurah Rai Sports Complex) in Denpasar, was fairly well attended and sponsored by a cigarette company, Mantra was unable to continue the festival in 2009 due to the tremendous financial loss he incurred. The same was true of the large-scale Soundrenaline festival series, sponsored by a national cigarette company. In 2009 Soundrenaline was held at GWK (Garuda Wishnu Kencana), a huge outdoor tourism venue in the Bukit, southern Bali. It welcomed the country's biggest rock acts, including Seringai, Burgerkill, Gigi, Nidji, and Slank. Local bands included

Superman Is Dead and Geekssmile, as well as pop Bali acts Nanoe Biroe and XXX and gender-bending artists like jazz guitarist Balawan, who often includes gamelan instruments within his performance, as well as compositional tropes such as the pentatonicism and interlocking parts (*kotekan*) (Harnish 2013). Without giving specific reason (but likely due to the exorbitant cost of organizing the event), Soundrenaline was cancelled until 2014, when it was moved to a simultaneous two-city show in Surabaya and Medan.

Concerts dedicated to a social or environmental cause are distinguished from concerts meant purely for entertainment: These *konser amal*, or charity concerts have included earthquake and poverty relief, HIV/AIDS awareness, orangutan conservation and an event to protest a land reclamation project in southern Bali. *Konser amal* are an important form of activism in Indonesia, and were often organized by scene participants themselves around causes for which they took an interest. Many *konser amal* seek to raise monetary support for particular crises. “Rock for Quake Relief,” for example a series of Padang earthquake benefits held at Hard Rock Café in Kuta and Black Dog in Legian in 2009, featured bands Nymphaea, Navicula, Balian, and Geekssmile. After operational costs, the events only raised a little more than 10 million rupiah (\$1,000) for earthquake victims in Padang. Funds were turned over to a reputable NGO in Padang, which used them to complete the final phase of its Transitional Shelter Project. The funds were rather meager, compared to fundraising strategies by other NGOs or governmental organizations, but they were a source of pride for participating bands and an important strategy for raising awareness about larger issues that compounded earthquake recovery, like a lack of sufficient Disaster Relief and Recovery (DRR) infrastructure in Indonesia.

It was also a means for local artists and audiences to express their collective empathy for earthquake victims. Thus, these events were important for camaraderie within the scene, as individuals came together to support the cause, as well as to encourage active engagement among young audiences. Other notable charity events included “Melayu Bersatu” (Malays United), held in 2009 by Devildice, Nymphaea, Navicula, Balian, and Geekssmile to encourage peace between Malaysians and Indonesians, following a series of violent attacks against Indonesian citizens in Malaysia. In 2010, bands came together for a fundraising event held at Forrest Club in Denpasar to support the family of Franky Sahilatua, a legendary Indonesian singer and songwriter who was then hospitalized with advanced cancer in his spine. The event, called “Fight Franky Fight,” included performances by Superman is Dead, Dialog Dini Hari, Day After The Rain, and Nosstress. Franky passed away a few months later, in April 2011. Chapter 4 will explore the importance of *konser amal* to scene subjectivities and solidarity.

Since SID and Moel Eternal Madness held Bali’s first underground concerts in the 1990s, indie scene insiders have been directly involved in organizing events, from securing sponsorship and hiring an event organizer to selecting the venue or location, bands, and designing and distributing publication materials. Following the bombings, Rudolf Dethu and Igo Blado each ran weekly events sponsored by a cigarette company and targeting distinct genres: Dethu was in charge of A Rock Society, a weekly event featuring Bali’s punk, metal, and rock bands, while Igo ran Downtown Groove, a program that included jazz, pop Bali, and indie pop artists on its lineup. The events were not part of the cigarette brand’s marketing strategy but were, in fact, conceptualized by Dethu and Igo, who then pursued the sponsorship necessary to pull them off. Since then,

both Dethu and Igo have organized numerous concerts in Bali, in support of the local bands and musicians whom they respect and count among their friends. Finding the right location for an indie show is always a struggle, however. Dethu recalled his struggles deciding where to hold Nymphaea's album launch in 2008. He was considering Hard Rock Café because it was centrally located and featured a large stage with a decent sound system. Unfortunately, the high entry fee (Harga Tiket Masuk, HTM) would alienate Nymphaea's primary fanbase of Denpasar teenagers. While he negotiated a reduced ticket price of Rp. 35,000 (\$3.50), he decided that this, too, was too expensive for local fans. In 2009, Igo and Dethu both had an agreement that they would not hold a concert that cost more than Rp. 20,000 (USD \$2). By 2014, this was often the minimum cost of events with an entry fee, and 50,000 (USD \$5) was more typical.

Album launches mark an important benchmark for bands that had made the crossover from being amateurs to professional recording artists, in the eyes of many scene leaders—even if the albums were self-funded and self-released. These were often intimate gatherings in small clubs or favorite indie gathering places, and other bands were often asked to perform (always for free) to support the honored band, which would sell its newly printed merchandise to recover the cost of the event.

In addition to outdoor events and indoor music venues, local businesses may temporarily erect a performance space inside—or, more commonly, in front of—their establishments. Reasons for such gigs have included celebrating a new location opening or product launch, or as part of some other marketing strategy to attract an untapped market of indie fans-cum-consumers. Thus, bands like Discotion Pill and Scared of Bums may perform for a new motorbike launch at a Yamaha or Honda store. The Circle K

convenience store chain hosted for a brief period a weekly event called “Nongkrong Sabtu Sore,” (Hanging out on Saturday Afternoon). And the telecommunications company 3 (pronounced Tri) organized an earthquake relief fundraiser following the disastrous Padang earthquake at a Denpasar branch. Under the guise of supporting the cause (a *kotak amal*, or donations box was placed in front of the stage) bands Geekssmile, Nymphaea, and Balian performed for a young audience of potential customers.

As the preceding description of performance types and venues suggests, there was no shortage of opportunities to play for a live audience in Bali in post-bomb Bali. Financial viability, however, was a consistent problem. As suggested previously, audiences for local bands (almost exclusively young Balinese and Indonesians) are reluctant to pay entry fees or purchase food and beverages. Bands often do not make a sufficient living from live gigs, because few pay a standard fee. Some offer only food and beer to the bands. Artist fees for university events are also often low, particularly if the host department cannot secure corporate sponsorship. Since ticket, food, and beverage sales cannot compensate for the operational costs of a venue or production costs for an outdoor concert or festival, government or corporate sponsorship has always been important for concert events in Bali. While at small events organized by indie scene participants, a production company may donate its services (including sound equipment and crew), sponsorships help to reduce the overhead costs and ensure that local events can continue to happen. Cigarette and telecommunications companies based in Indonesia have historically been the most common sponsor types for rock music events. While artists and event producers often expressed a desire to be able to put on events without the support of sponsors, they all agreed that securing sponsorships was a necessary part

of their professional work. Practical, business savvy at negotiating sponsor contracts was an important means of ensuring that the impracticality of making art may continue.

The chart below lists the most frequently gigging bands in the 2000s. Band names indexed in bold font were significantly more active than others, and many became primary participants in this study:

Table 1: Active Bali-based Bands Between 2008 and 2014

Band Name	Self-described Genre
Bad Suffer	Punk Rock
Balian	Rock / Grunge
Bali Dewata (Collective)	Hip Hop (DJs, MCs, & Break dancers)
Blackened	Punk Rock
Bersimbah Darah	Grindcore
Born By Mistake	Death Metal / Progressive Metal
Cordial Army	Hardcore Gangbang (Punk, Hardcore, & Metal
Criminal Assholes	Punk Rock
Day After the Rain	Indie
Debuntu	FunTheMental (Alternative / Indie / Rock)
Devildice	Old School (Tropical) Punk
Dialog Dini Hari	Folk, Blues & Ballads
Discotion Pill	Synth Pop Electronic
The Djihard	Punk Rock
D’Kantin	Indie
Ed Eddy & Residivis	Rock Residivis (Repeat Offenders)
Error Scream	Grindcore
Framing Blood	Death Metal / Trash / Grindcore
Geekssmile	Rock n’ Roll
Gerbang 13	Hardcore Trash Metal
Infectious [sic] Arteries	Metal / Thrash Metal / Death metal
In Utero	Grunge
Jeanie	Metal / Rock
Joyride	Pop / Rock / Punk
King of Panda	Pop / Punk / Hardcore Maniac
KiS Band	Rock (<i>mebasa Bali</i> : in the Balinese language)
Lorong	Metal / Hardcore / Beatdown
Moist Vagina	Grunge
Natter Jack	Punk
Navicula	Grunge / Psychedelic Rock
Nosstress	Acoustic / Folk / Pop

Nymphea	Alternative Moody Rock
Painful by Kisses	Post-hardcore / Rock / Alternative Metal
Parau	Metal
Postmen	Rap Metalcore
Psychofun	Alternative / Pop Punk / Rock
Rythm [sic] on Blood	Punk rock
Ripper Clown	Progressive / Rock
Rokavatar	Rock
Scared of Bums	Punk / Metal / Melodic Core
Scream Effect	Emo Metal
Superman Is Dead	Punk Rock
Suicidal Sinatra	Psychobilly / Rockabilly
The Brews	Melodicore/ Punk rock
The Djihard	Punk Rock
The Dissland	Rock
The Hydrant	Rockabilly
The Last One	Rock n' Roll Ethno Metal Punk
The Sora	Mix Pop
The Wheels	Hard Rock
Tol Band Tol	New Wave
Triple Six	Death Metal
Trojan	Bali Death Metal
Two Ice Queen	Modern Gothic
Wagonciva	Experimental Metal

It is important to note that the current study's research scope excludes a number of professional bands on the island, including top-40 cover bands and gamelan musicians working at hotels and restaurants on a weekly or nightly basis. Some research consultants traversed this soundworld as well: Mark Liepmann, former drummer for Dialog Dini Hari; Zio Orah, current bassist for DDH; and his brother, Morris Orah, vocalist and guitarist for rock band Morelia all performed regularly with top-40 bands during the 2000s. These artists indicated that their participation in such bands was out of financial necessity rather than creative interest. Cover bands, they claimed, did not stoke their creative passion for original compositions. Professional acts like top-40 bands should not be dismissed simply because their performances cater to a pre-existing trend in Bali for

bands to repeat the most popular hits on the radio in live performance. Some of the most talented and hardest working artists on the island are among these bands. They were also the only live musicians most tourists ever saw perform. For better or worse, then, the top-40 trend is an important component of Bali's live music scene because it helps musicians to support themselves and their families financially, and it is also highly visible for tourists unfamiliar with alternative music scenes in Bali.

While after 2002, many more local venues began welcoming rock bands to perform, by 2008, many venues were closing their doors due to bankruptcy, difficulties obtaining live music permits, and skyrocketing rent. Ozigo (Denpasar), Black Dog (Legian), The Wave (Kuta), and Raw (Kuta), which, in their heyday, were bustling hubs for the indie scene, have all closed. Even the most popular sites for live performance—and the gathering places for indie professionals to hang out and socialize—including Forrest Club and Serambi Arts Antida in Denpasar, suffered the same fate. Transient businesses tend to be the norm in Bali, however: Restaurants, souvenir shops, and live music venues have all suffered from a lack of consistent income and too much competition in the unpredictable tourism industry.

Live music venues additionally struggled to identify and cultivate a paying audience. Venues catering to a local Balinese audience would have to contend with the fact that most patrons were unwilling or unable to pay a cover fee or purchase food or beverages. Even cover charges as low as 25,000 rupiah (USD \$2.50) were prohibitively expensive for most Balinese in the 2000s. Live music venues were most profitable if they were able to attract an audience of foreign club-goers who will purchase alcohol throughout the night. Alternatively, local venues could acquire a corporate sponsor to

recoup sales losses during live music events. Cigarette and beer companies often provided financial support for live performances in exchange for advertising rights and product distribution and sales during the event. Still, the ephemerality of Bali's live music venues is an accepted reality. While with each venue closing the frequency of local gigs would decline, indie artists and audiences, though temporarily displaced, would eventually find new home territories. One Kuta venue was also popular with young, metal artists until around 2010 was Peanuts Club, which was opened in 1984 and began featuring metal shows in the 1990s. But like many clubs in Kuta, this one was only partially open to underground rock shows. Metal bands were relegated to the oldest (and non-air conditioned) portion of the venue. One Kuta venue, however, has consistently welcomed underground bands of every generic persuasion to cut their teeth in a local bar.

Twice Bar

The first time I ever cruised down Jalan Legian in Kuta, a passive passenger in a friend's pickup truck, I was too distracted by the women to think deeply about the deafening drum and bass emanating from every one-room bar and multilevel nightclub monstrosity we passed. Young, gyrating women with long, ironed tresses, thick makeup, and short, skintight dresses flanked each of these "music" venues, stained with sordid tales of drugs and debauchery. I fumed at women's subjugation by Bali's seedier touristic ostentations: entering the territory of Kuta's carnal funhouses, the human décor left little to the imagination and even less hope that something genuinely healing and like home could be found in the music here.

But Twice Bar was something different. It is smaller, darker, and older than almost every club in its midst, and its walls block the street noise and enclose arak-infused nights of the suffocating heat of bodies in motion: heads thrashing forward and back in tandem and hands raised skyward signing metal's devil horns...or spike-studded bodies clashing together in the mosh pits or pogoing in reverence to old school punk. This is where I discovered Bali's love affair with everything rock.

What it lacks in space and quality stage and sound equipment, Twice Bar makes up for in longevity and gritty, punk rock style. The bar is decorated with a carefully crafted fusion of 1950s rockabilly and California surf punk. A giant support post, painted black with flames rising from its base, resides in the middle of the room and obscures a view of the "stage," a small space no more than five meters wide and three meters deep marked not by a raised platform, but by microphone stands indicated the front and framed on both sides by speakers. The well-worn mixing board, placed stage right, is only periodically manned by Twice Bars booking agent and manager, Eka. Posters of The Ramones, Nirvana, and Social Distortion suggest the diverse genres on tap. A black and white checkered tile floor, more red and orange flames licking up the walls and the bar, leopard-print stool seats, and a huge mural opposite the stage stylized as an homage to classic, airbrush-like tattoos of cats and sexy women all combine to distinguish this bar from the dozens of cookie-cutter nightclubs just down the road on Jalan Legian that all worship the same gods of top 40 and the dance club mundane.

If the red-eyed, sun-scorched Aussie surfers reeking of Bintang beer and stumbling down Jalan Poppies II usually pass by Twice Bar unaware of its legacy as Kuta's longest-standing rock club, they will be stopped in their tracks on a night when Superman Is Dead makes an impromptu appearance. The sidewalks and even the street in front of the bar will be clogged with eager fans, some cramming indoors, and others trickling out for a breath of air or a smoke or a chat with friends. Maybe they'll even stop in to check out the action. Of course, most will drop in for the cheap arak shooters rather than the rock acts on the stage. But the young bands and fans will always outnumber them with a proclivity for the hard stuff—music, that is—who reclaim a bit of Kuta's nightlife as their own. On any given night, raw rock power emanates from this would-be dive and invades crowded Poppies II, reminding the debauched, sunburned masses in their Bintang singlets that these streets lay in "Kuta Rock City."¹⁷

Of all of the young musicians who form the hundreds of hobby bands throughout Bali, very few will ever play in public for an audience. A few groups, however, will take the next step and sign up to perform at a localized public event, such as a neighborhood fundraiser (*bazaar*). For bands living in southern Bali, however, the allure of a large public gig may lead them to funnel their creative energies toward a wider audience. The most common first context for a new band to perform live is by applying to take part in a *lomba band*, a band competition judged by a panel of experts, which generally feeds into an upcoming concert or festival in need of opening acts. Artists often vividly remember their first performances in front of a live audience and experienced a diversity of

¹⁷ "Kuta Rock City" is the title track from SID's 2003 album.

audience responses: Discotion Pill's first performance as an electro-rock act met with cold perplexity, while Psychopathic's first festival gig in 2000 was wildly popular, despite the fact that they played almost exclusively covers and singer Marmar could not remember the words to the English-language songs they selected. Interestingly, both Dizta and Marmar site the same reasons for the audience response: the audiences were unfamiliar with the genres they performed. Dizta said that the audience didn't know enough about electro-rock to appreciate it, particularly because Discotion Pill was performing on a lineup that featured mostly metal artists. Marmar argues that the audience's lack of familiarity with the metal songs his bands performed—as well as with the English language—enabled them to forgive Marmar's stumbling over the lyrics.

In Bali, as in almost every setting for live band performance worldwide, the time one plays on a program's lineup is generally a direct indicator of one's notoriety as a musician. Bands performing toward the end of a program are almost always more senior and well-known artists, and the final act of the evening is the headliner. Bands that take the stage under the scorching heat of the late morning and afternoon sun are, with rare exception, young, amateur acts. This may be their first performance in front of an audience, and they may have even been hand-selected by a committee during a previous *lomba band*. If their performance is well received, as was the case for Psychopathic, then the band may be invited to play other local events later on in the afternoon or even on the evening program.

But an alternative to the music festival that has been welcoming both seasoned scene veterans and amateur music acts alike since the late 1990s is Twice Bar, located on

the busy one-way alley Poppies II in downtown Kuta.¹⁸ Almost anyone who requests to be included on the lineup will be allowed to play, and bands only receive free *arak* as their compensation. No one, not even senior or touring international artists, is paid to play. Thus, in terms of professionalism, Twice Bar levels the playing field. Of course, that also means that the venue tends to attract younger and more inexperienced bands (and audiences). But the importance of this venue as a landmark for Bali's rock history supersedes the importance of a quality sound system or band fee for all of the professional bands I examined: SID, The Hydrant, Suicidal Sinatra, Navicula, Devildice, Geekssmile, Ganjil, Nymphaea, Discotion Pill, Scared of Bums, Nosstress, and Dialog Din Hari have all performed at Twice Bar, on multiple occasions. In all interviews, when I asked what is the most important site for live performance, Twice Bar was at the top of the list. It does, however, tend to deter some scene elites from frequenting the venue unless a well-known act is performing, and the small size and location far from most artists' homes in Denpasar, makes it a less than ideal venue for regular hanging out.

Twice Bar complicates a simplistic portrayal of sub-scenes divided by genre and locale, however. Though the venue's owner tends to attract more like-minded punk bands than anything else, Twice Bar has an open-door policy for local bands playing any type of music. In fact, almost all amateur bands in southern Bali will perform for a live audience at Twice at least once. As a result, Twice Bar features more rock concerts than any other venue on Bali's map.

Beings in Motion in Performance

¹⁸ Baulch also notes that Twice Bar was a central territory for punk rockers in the 1990s (2007).

Now that the settings and types of event have been explored, let us turn to what happens within a performance that makes such events valuable experiences—both for the artists and their audiences—that are worth repeating. Indie scenes in Bali also differ in key ways from other performance settings. Earlier in this chapter, I described the generic references that enable a band to cultivate a signature style. In addition to the actual sound produced by playing, a musician's fashion, physical comportment while playing and other physical gestures on stage, as well as interaction with the audience are all clear means to distinguish indie music from other soundworlds in Bali. Artists who are able to perfect the right moves to a positive audience response will also shape the success or failure of a performance.

Similar to rock performance in other cultural settings, a band's vocalist—usually the frontman or band leader—will interact more directly with the audience than any other member of the band. This helps to cultivate a social closeness between the audience and performance. Frequent perceived eye contact with audience members and gestures toward them throughout the performance are typical within a rock band as are signs to incite audience members to engage through dance or singing along. These are common practices to anyone who has attended a live rock performance. What is special about stage comportment and audience interaction in Bali, however, is how different is this behavior from other settings for musical engagement. Take, for example, a gamelan performance in the outer courtyard of a temple during an *odalan*, a temple anniversary celebration. The audience will encounter musicians, not on a raised stage, but seated on the ground. These musicians are also rarely the primary point of attention: they accompany dancers and contribute one of many sonic components (including other

ensembles) within the same space and event. When the individual players move, they cultivate a seamless unity, with the exception of key leaders within the ensemble.

A rock performer, however, is quite often on a raised stage of space set apart from the audience, to which he ideally draws audience members' complete focus. He displays great variation and individuality in his bodily gestures and may even cultivate signature stage moves that define him as a performer—and distinguish him from other groups. Robi Navicula, for example, will punctuate his songs critiquing environmental and social injustices in Indonesia with a piercing gaze with which he surveys the audience, soliciting agreement for his lyrical messages. He may point a finger or pump a fist into the air above his head in order to emphasize his point. Prima Geekssmile varies between a softened, introspective stance with eyes closed in contemplation, presumably of the music, to one of aggressive, hyper-masculine power. His onstage gestures are at moments reminiscent of a young Mick Jagger and at others a Zach de la Rocha, frontman for Rage Against the Machine—one of the primary influences on Geekssmile's style and politically charged lyrics. He may, at moments, draw attention away from himself and toward Geekssmile's guitarist, Bayak, by gazing in his direction or even imitating the motions of the guitarist's body in air guitar fashion. Eka, Scared of Bums's singer, notoriously breaches the boundaries between audience and performers whenever possible by coming into close physical proximity with other bodies in the audience, at the front row. He may hand over the mike to an audience member, inviting him to take over the vocal part or stage dive onto the crowd, which always lifts him up and sends him gliding over their heads. Where no stage limits his path, he may provoke a heightened level of

moshing among dancers at the front row in the “mosh pit” zone, encouraging collision and increasing the level of excitement within the performance.

Of course, all performances engage in some sort of dramatic gestures on the stage to inspire excitement and enjoyment among the audience. Vocalists performing without a guitar enjoy more freedom of bodily expression, but guitarists and bassists can incorporate their instruments into onstage gestures for dramatic effect. Made Navicula thrills onlookers by performing high leaps into the air at rhythmic climaxes or shifts in the music, raising his bass high above him and then bringing it crashing down at the perfect moment. Drummers, who sit behind their kits and must bring all four limbs into use for playing, are limited in their ability to exhibit extraneous bodily gestures. However, drummers like Agus Nympha express the intense physical and technical strain of performance with pursed lips, wrinkled foreheads, and dramatic, thrashing strikes with his drumsticks—all techniques that help to rally excitement among the audience.

Audiences, too, contribute to the *suasana*, atmosphere, of a performance. Those closest to the stage tend to be the most focused on the performances and engaged physically with the music (Fonarow 2006). Fonarow’s description of audience participation at British indie gigs also applies in the Balinese context: “Indie audience behavior is often intensely active and dynamic. At indie music performances, the social space near the front of the stage is characterized by a high degree of direct contact between strangers and, at times, by spirited activity. Indeed, for a portion of the audience, the music performance is a physically taxing experience” (Fonarow 2006, 10). During an ideal performance setting, where musicians inspire deep, focused attention from their audiences, fans bind closely together and engage in collective dance (head-banging and

moshing are most common). The taxing and dramatic physical and emotional experience, shared among participants, contributes to the event's felt intensity—to sensations of euphoria and even timelessness reported time and again by audience members—much like entering into an altered state of consciousness. The degree of interaction between performers and fans, as well as the intensity of physical action and dancing is, as in most contexts for rock music performance, a means to measure a band's popularity and an event's success. Communal movement, as much as the sounds of the music, inspires the mutual tuning that unfolds within the finite province of meaning to which Schutz assigns musical performance (1964 [1951]).

Artist and audience comportment in the rock concert setting differs dramatically from many settings for traditional Balinese performance. With the exception of a few social dances, bodily engagement between performers and nonperformers is almost entirely absent. Furthermore, what is appropriate audience comportment within traditional performance—sitting cross-legged on the floor or ground, chatting with friends and occasionally demonstrating detachment from the performance event or lack of direct focus on the performers—is not at all ideal within rock music performance. In fact, where audiences exhibit such behaviors at a rock gig, they intend them to reflect their disinterest or disapproval of a featured act.

Individual performers and audiences also have their own preferences for the ideal performance. Sari, vocalist for Nymphaea and one of a very small number of women rock performers in Bali, mentioned that she prefers intimate, indoor events at bars or favorite indie hangouts. She prefers the “feeling” of these events over large-scale concerts with corporate sponsors: “With regards to aura, you get the feel more at a bar, because, yeah,

well, not only in the bar, but in terms of the stage, there is a closeness with the audience. There's no [tall] stage and sound equipment is placed wherever. It's connected. We sing, the audience joins us as well. It feels more, yeah, I like the adrenaline, compared to a big stage with an audience of thousands, where the stage has a barricade and we're far from the crowd. In order to feel that adrenaline, you need to be closer to the audience" (Sari, interview, 2010).¹⁹

Dizta Discotion Pill prefers the exact opposite type of event: He enjoys large, sponsored gigs at outdoor concerts or festivals more because the sound quality is often superior to small, indoor events: "If we play at Twice Bar, you know, the sound system isn't as good as larger ones. It's better if we can play on a big stage, because the bigger sound is better for us. It's like *boom boom boom!*" (Dizta, interview, 2009).²⁰ For Dizta, whose electro-rock band experiments with subtle sound mixing through their own board, operated from a computer onstage, the priority is control over the sound quality, rather than artist and fan intimacy.

The degree of closeness between audiences and performers varies, depending upon the performance setting. Indoor events at small clubs like Twice Bar allow audiences to get very close to performers and even to make physical contact, while large-scale outdoor events on raised platforms create a physical separation. An additional security barricade often blocks a concertgoer's immediate contact with the stage. Only individuals holding backstage passes—crew, media, and band member's friends and

¹⁹ "Kalau secara aura jauh lebih dapat *feel*nya di bar, karena ya, nggak harus di bar, yang istilahnya ini panggung, ini penonton yang kedekatan...jadi sound cuman ditaruh taruh, gabunglah kita nyanyi penonton gabung juga lebih kerasa ya ininya ya apa, ya adrenalin kalau gitu dibandingkan kita panggung besar penonton ribuan, dari panggung ada barikade-nya jauhlah sama penontonnya, tapi ya puas lihat penontonnya. Untuk ngerasahin adrenalin lebih kerasa kalau dekat sama penonton."

²⁰ "Kalau di Twice Bar, kadang-kadang *much people, you know, the sound system* kurang lah sama yang besar-besar. Lebih enak kalo pas di panggung gede, *because the sounds more bigger and more like boom, boom, boom.*"

families—are permitted in the space between the stage and the barricade, while regular concertgoers must watch from the other side. Contact—or lack of contact—between performers and nonperformers is not perceived in the same way by all performers: Eka Scared of Bums enjoys moshing with his fans and Sari Nymphaea likes the audience’s “aura” at intimate events. These artists prefer to be closer to audiences. Dizta Discotion Pill prefers larger, raised stages, but not because he prefers to be distanced from the audience: rather, these stages often come equipped with better sound amplification. No artists that I interviewed mentioned the need for a raised stage or audience barricade as a security measure. Audience members were never considered a physical annoyance or threat. While occasionally, musicians have been injured by overzealous moshers or because a fight broke out at a show, no artists—not even SID, who attract an audience of thousands for their large, outdoor shows—ever mentioned experiencing targeted violence or worrying about their security in intimate performance events. This sense of safety and security, even in front of crowds of thousands, points to an important difference between “rock stars” in the Indonesian context and well-known American or European artists. This does not mean that artists did not also enjoy a degree of privacy from fans during performance events: Many artists described their time backstage or in a greenroom before a show as an important opportunity to relax, tune their instruments, change clothes, and hang out with friends and family, drinking beers and sharing jokes. Opportunities to relax and socialize before and after performing were often as important to artists as the time they spent on the stage. The backstage was an important private space for artists and their entourage that deepened their collective intimacy, while limiting fan access. And while

Sari mentioned enjoying audience intimacy, she also raised a point regarding fan and performer relations that directly limits women's roles in performance.

The indie scene, like many other settings for public performance in Indonesia, does not extend the same roles to women as it does men. As this chapter has illustrated, the vast majority of band performers are men. Sari was one of only two female artists I encountered fronting a rock band in Bali. According to Sari, this is because their parents often explicitly forbid young girls to attend rock concerts, much less to take part in a band.²¹ Sari feels lucky to be an exception; her father gave her permission to join a band because he, too, was passionate about rock music, and had played in a band himself when he was younger. Sari said in our interview together, "I consider myself lucky because my parents approve, you know. But in my opinion, in most areas [of Indonesia] it's rare that you find women in the world of rock music. They don't get permission from their parents" (Sari, interview, 2010).²² As Wallach notes, the socializing that happens around music, *nongkrong*, is a "largely masculine culture of 'hanging out'" that parents feel is inappropriate or unsafe for their young daughters. While, in my observations, socializing in the indie scene was less segregated than in other socializing practices, nearly all of the scene's most active musicians were men (2008, 20).

²¹ To hear an audio excerpt of Sari's comments on women in Indonesian rock, see "Chapter 3" in the research blog (<http://baliunderground.com/chapter-3/>).

²² "Saya nih termasuk sebuah keberuntungan karena orang tua saya, eh, merestui gitu. Menurut saya sih kebanyakan daerah tu jarang ada perempuan yang di dunia music rock itu tidak mendapatkan ijin dari orang tua."

Nongkrong: Deep Hanging Out

To conclude this chapter, I zoom in on that scene practice intersecting all others and which underscores music-making as a medium or socialization: *Nongkrong*, which roughly translates to the verb “to squat,” refers to a habit of Indonesian men (but never women) to squat, feet flat, rears hovering just above the ground, and engage in long, casual dialogue. In Bali—and indeed throughout much of Indonesia—chairs and sofas for casual sitting are a still-yet unpopular, colonial imposition. Sitting lower to the ground is often preferred as a sign of humility, mutual respect for one’s interlocutors, and (for many) more comfortable way “sit.” Of course squatting, rather than sitting directly on the ground, also keeps one’s clothing clean and dry.

Wallach describes this “ethic of sociality” as “part of a particular orientation toward the presence of others...” (2008, 20). *Nongkrong* is often the practice that first leads young boys to take an interest in learning about music: sitting around with friends at family compounds, on the *tiang sanga* a pavilion for receiving guests; squatting on the edge of sidewalks on neighborhood streets (*nongkrong pinggir jalan*); resting on the beach or at popular neighborhood gathering points, like *poskamling* (security posts), boys while away their afternoons casually socializing, talking about music, strumming a guitar (if they have one), and discussing the possibility of making music together. Non-Balinese, as well as Balinese who prefer to live separately from their families, welcome their friends to hang out at their *kos-kosan*—a boarding room once only popular with university students that has become a popular dwelling place for many young Indonesians who have relocated to the city. Space is a problem for *nongkrong* here, however, since

each room may be only large enough for a mattress, small table, and chair. However, since most Indonesians tend to choose their *kos-kosan* based on recommendations by friends already living there, together with neighbors, they can transform a *rumah kost* (boarding house) into a *tempat nongkrong* (hangout place) that, interestingly, resembles in spirit and activity the *tiang sanga*, less the central location for sitting.

Wallach adds further on *nongkrong*, "...it is possible to view almost all music-related activities in Indonesia, from recording to performing to listening, as shaped and informed by an interactive sensibility derived from *nongkrong* sociality" (2008, 167). *Nongkrong* occurs in the social spaces around the "work" of music production: in the downtime during rehearsals, between takes in the recordings studio, during set changes, or while waiting for a late bandmate's arrival. *Nongkrong* happens backstage between bands, crews, and friends and family; at tour buses and hotel rooms during out-of-town gigs; and occasionally, between musicians and media representatives from local radio, newspapers, or magazines. Smoking *kretek* and drinking *kopi tubruk* are important components of this casual socializing, so it rarely occurs in indoor spaces where smoking is not allowed. An important means to build a rapport between strangers, establish the trust for professional relationships, and deepen the friendships necessary to maintain a desire to play together, *nongkrong* is an indispensable part of Bali's indie scene.

Many of the venues that hosted live performance also doubled by day as important settings for extended periods of hanging out, where scene participants could gather, smoke, drink coffee, and talk about music. Between 2008 and 2014, at any given time, one or two venues became favorite hangouts for scene participants—though each venue's significance was fleeting. In 2008, the most popular hangout, which attracted

anywhere from a dozen to more than 50 patrons on a daily basis, was Forrest Club, an open-air café built adjacent to the *distro* owned by Dethu and a business partner, Suicide Glam. But after only fifteen months, due to low profits and management turnover, Forrest Club closed down.

For months following Forrest Club's closing, hanging out in public spaces simply did not happen in Denpasar, but moved behind "closed doors," at band member's homes. Then in 2010, sound engineer and studio owner Anom Darsana opened another garden café and music venue behind his recording studio, called Serambi Arts Antida. The open-air bar and café featured an expansive lawn, upon which a stage as large as 8x10 meters could be erected for live music events. The roofed dining/drinking area also featured a smaller, ceramic-tiled stage for smaller shows. Located in Padang Galak, Denpasar, just off the Ngurah Rai Bypass, a main artery connecting the Badung regency's entire coast, Serambi was an easy motorbike ride away for anyone in Denpasar, Sanur, or even Kuta. Unfortunately, Serambi Arts Antida closed shortly after its second-year anniversary, after Anom's business partner, who owned the lease to the land, decided to sell the property to the highest bidder. Thankfully, Anom's recording studio, for which he owned the land lease, was not impacted. Three years later, Anom opened a new, smaller garden café called Soundgarden, located in front of his studio and replacing his parking lot. As of the end of 2014, Soundgarden remained an important location for intimate music and art events, though the small size limited its use for casual socializing. In 2014, the family behind Taman 65, an education foundation dedicated to resurrecting Bali's violent past during the 1965-66 massacres, opened a large venue in southern Denpasar: Taman Baca (The Reading Garden) featured an exhibition room, large garden for live performances

and socializing. This, according to many indie scene participants, is quickly becoming the favorite site for hanging out among musicians, artists, and activists living in Denpasar.

As described briefly above, in 2009, the international convenience store chain Circle K tried to capitalize upon this Indonesian ethic of sociality and tap into the indie scene as a potential market for its products by hosting a series called NOSARE (Nongkrong Sabtu Sore, Saturday Afternoon Hangout), organized in partnership with Oz Radio. The radio station would broadcast live from Circle K locations in Denpasar and Kuta from a temporary stage at the stores' front entrances. The short-lived series attracted some well-known acts, including folk trio Dialog Dini Hari and retro 60s rock band Debuntu, but it did not serve to replace other nongkrong settings: Unfortunately, the stages erected actually transformed a previous organic hangout space popular among teenagers into a concert setting that left little room hanging out or enjoying the music.

Outlasting most other hangout spaces in Denpasar is Veranda Café, located on Jalan Hayam Wuruk in Denpasar, not far from the arts conservatory and adjacent to the gallery and home of well known eco-architect Popo Danes. Veranda Café features a quaint menu of classics like Bali coffee, *pisang goreng* (fried bananas), and *nasi goreng* (fried rice), sporadic Wi-Fi, and no space for live music. Yet its strategic location near a number of universities and newspaper headquarters in Denpasar makes it a popular meeting place for students, journalists, and music professionals. While it never attracts the audience size or enthusiasm that Forrest Club did, Veranda Café continues to be an important place for *nongkrong*.

As teenagers become young adults and amateur musicians become professionals, roadside socializing (*nongkrong pinggir jalan*), becomes less common. A sense of

gengsi (prestige) prevented many who lived in the city from feeling comfortable with this socializing activity associated with village life. Indie scene participants, many of whom are from middle class backgrounds, have attended university, and have the financial means to hang out at cafés and purchase expensive coffee, tended to socialize in commercial spaces for this purpose. Yet this behavior shifts, on occasion, and often in performance settings, where the euphoria of a music experience encourages artists to forgo their egos and cultivate intimacy in any setting. At Twice Bar, for example, when the venue has already filled to capacity and musicians and fans want to engage, smoke (Twice Bar has been a nonsmoking venue since 2013), or get some relief from the heat indoors, they will line Poppies II, squatting on the edges of the sidewalk to chat.

To my regret, for much of the first few months of my research, I overlooked the significance of *nongkrong* as an activity for scene building—for ensuring that indie professionals maintained enough common ground to make the scene worth their while. I dismissed long hours spent smoking cigarettes on the front stoops of studios, drinking coffee or beer backstage at a concert, or making jokes at local *warung* as simply downtime, and not the “work” of making music that I was interested in understanding. In fact, I often interpreted it as a waste of time. Now I understand that it may be the most significant use of time for indie professionals. I have also observed that those who did not frequently hang out were not only excluded from valuable conversations about music, but they also risked being ostracized. Wallach observed this in Jakarta as well: Someone who failed to hang out may be called *sombong* or arrogant (Wallach 2008), and I heard the popular proverb “*kacang yang lupa kulitnya*,” a peanut who has forgotten his skin—in other words, someone who is forgotten his community—used to describe more than one

artist who did not hang out regularly with other artists and scene participants. *Nongkrong* is an indispensable ethic of sociality. Work or family obligations or even shyness are not excuses for not hanging out.

While the analytical distance between the researcher and researched, once preferable in the social sciences has been replaced by an ideal of co-theorization (Rappaport 2008), it is also important to acknowledge, phenomenologically, that we are different people with different stances toward music-making and socializing. My personal agency and social background limited my ability to hang out as a productive and well-known participant in Bali's indie scene. A few months or even years of hanging out could not make up for a lifetime of knowing people within the scene as neighbors and friends. Furthermore, my objectives as an ethnomusicologist to zoom out and analyze the musical values and subjectivities that most research participants took for granted required a frequent stepping away from the immediacy of social interaction to observe and look for patterns. As Bourdieu argues, "The practical relation the anthropologist has with his object, that of the outsider, excluded from the real play of social practices by the fact that he has no place (except by choice or by way of a game) in the space observed, is the extreme case and the ultimate truth of the relationship that the observer, willy-nilly, consciously or not, has with his object" (1990, 33). Bourdieu continues, "This means that participant observation is, in a sense, a contradiction in terms..." (ibid., 34). While I did fail to acknowledge the importance of *nongkrong* early on the research, I was also never able to socially interact with the dexterity and familiarity required for this deep hanging out, as if I were indeed, an insider. And it was not until my stance as a researcher evolved into a professional role, in which I played an active part to organize concerts and festivals

featuring many of the musicians participated in my research project that I was able to shed the researcher's skin and be treated as a collaborator and co-worker.

Just as Wallach argues that music is often a “facilitator of social intercourse and group solidarity (2008:162), so *nongkrong*, as social intercourse, becomes a facilitator of music production. As people engaged in casual dialogue, they formed and strengthened the social and professional alliances that will later impact where, what, and with whom they play music. Having home territories in which to hang out deepened social relationships within the indie scene and positively contributed to the musical creativity and output of a number up burgeoning artists. It also enhanced a critical social network that, for some, far removed from the traditional social networks of their families and home villages, constituted a primary domain for social camaraderie.

Conclusion

“Masa Kecil” by Suicidal Sinatra²³

²³ Masa kecil yang indah berlari–lari
Tak peduli yang akan terjadi
Hidupku bebas, bersinar, dan berarti
Bermain dengan malaikat, tak ada peri
Ciumi angkasa nafas yang suci
Riang bahagia tersenyumlah dunia
Jejak kaki yang tertinggal diatas bumi
Terhapus hujan tertiuap angin
Hidup bahagia senyum ibu tercinta

Ku akan melayang bersinar
Selamanya diatas dunia
Kita kan melayang bersama
Selamanya, selamanya...
Ku akan melayang bersinar
Selamanya diatas dunia
Seperti masa kecil yang indah
Bersama kita selamanya

Tangisanmu mampu pecahkan malam
Senyuman buatmu bahagia
dan tawamu mampu redamkan rasa

*A beautiful childhood, always running
 It didn't matter what happened
 My life was free, shining, and meaningful
 I played with angels, there were no fairies
 Smelled the sacred space of breath
 A carefree, happy, smiling world
 The footprints that were left on the earth
 Have been erased by the rain and blowing wind
 Living happily, the smile of beloved mother
 I will soar shining
 Forever above the world
 We will soar together
 Forever, forever
 I will soar shining
 Forever above the world
 Like a beautiful childhood
 Together with us forever...
 Your crying is able to shatter the night
 A smile makes you happy
 And your laughter can deaden the sensation
 Of the world's anger and arrogance...
 I will soar shining
 Forever above the world
 We will soar together
 Forever, forever
 I will soar shining
 Forever over the world
 Like a beautiful childhood
 Together with us, forever*

While throughout the 2000s, an astonishing number of bands performed live in front of audiences throughout Bali, very few considered themselves—or were considered by others within the scene—to be professional musicians. Their childhood passion for

Amarah dan sombongnya dunia

Ku akan melayang bersinar
 Selamanya diatas dunia
 Kita kan melayang bersama
 Selamanya, selamanya...
 Ku akan melayang bersinar
 Selamanya diatas dunia
 Seperti masa kecil yang indah
 Bersama kita, selamanya

styles of music evolved into temporary pastimes experimenting with new instruments and enjoying the company of friends. As children become adults, and school, work, or family obligations limit leisure time, most young musicians shelve their musical identities. According to the scene leaders who formed this study's primary consultants—and who shall be the focus for the next chapter—the majority of bands did not meet the benchmarks for professionalism. A view on the practice of music as a professional undertaking, however, is a key component to a music scene's long-term sustainability. As long as music-making is viewed as hobby, it is superfluous to the more important activities of daily life. Thus, though most young musicians would agree that the act of playing music together is rewarding, in the sense that it is fun, a great release valve from the stress of everyday life, and a means to receive praise from audiences, the enjoyment they experience playing music together is not enough. Play must become work for it to be taken seriously for the long-term.

Even if artists have aspirations to release an album, achieve media accolades, or tour nationally or internationally, imagining music as a profession was still difficult in post-bomb Bali, as Igo explained:

“Maybe it's different in other countries. Outside of Bali, when kids are seventeen, they have already demonstrated that ‘the band is my life.’ And they have the same vision and find people who have the same vision for the band. Maybe they rarely follow the festival circuit, but they immediately start marking art. Unlike here, where kids at that age, they still do not have a vision that music can be a profession. They still think, seventeen years, next year or two years from now, their focus will be to go to college. Not to build a profession. So the strength of a band to take shape is not as strong as elsewhere, because of those kinds of conditions”²⁴

²⁴ “Karena visinya mungkin berbeda dengan negara di luar ya. Di luar ya, ketika mereka berumur tujuh belas, mereka sudah menunjukkan bahwa band adalah hidup saya. Dan mereka mempunyai visi yang sama, menemukan orang-orang yang punya visi yang sama terhadap sebuah band. Mereka jarang mungkin tidak mengikuti jalur festival tapi langsung membuat sebuah karya. Berbeda di sini. Anak-anak umur segitu, mereka masih belum punya visi bahwa musik itu sebuah profesi. Mereka masih menganggap tujuh belas

In his response, Igo took for granted that there would be better opportunities for musicians to pursue their craft as professionals in other, more developed countries. Igo was building a comparison for me, as his interlocutor, to try to explain why musicians in Bali struggle to imagine music as a profession. While in my own experience pursuing a career as a professional musician, I would argue that it is difficult for a teenager in the United States to imagine a professional music career, Igo's analysis does point to a common theme in conversations in Bali about the professionalization of music being a relatively new phenomenon. Until bands like Superman Is Dead and Navicula built music careers, young musicians had no models for success

There have also been rites-of-passage set up by scene leaders such as Igo and Dethu that inhibit players from pursuing careers if, in their opinion, such players lack the skills to compete. Dethu saw the band festival's screening process as an important opportunity for him, as a gatekeeper to the national music industry, to identify acts with potential—and exclude acts that lacked it. Chapter 4 will explore will pursue the benchmarks for professionalism.

This chapter has focused on several essential practices within the indie scene: Forming a band, rehearsing, and writing original compositions formalize a commitment between individual musicians to eventually perform for a live audience. By providing opportunities for frequent engagement and socializing, the variety and frequency of performance opportunities in Bali, including at live music venues and for campus events, festivals, charity concerts, and album launches, contribute to the indie scene's stability.

tahun, tahun depan atau dua tahun lagi, fokus mereka adalah untuk kuliah. Bukan untuk membangun sebuah profesi. Makanya, makanya kekuatan band yang terbentuk itu tidak sekuat yang ada di luar. Karena kondisinya seperti itu.”

The difficulty for venues to make money or pay artists for live performances led to a dependency on commercial sponsorship that has forced artists and event organizers to negotiate their own goals in holding a performance with the marketing objectives of event sponsors. However, the negotiation is worth it, because live performance provides an important context for achieving that coveted mutual tuning process that heightens a sense of self-identity and belonging for musicians and audiences. Hanging out across all scene activities is also essential to deepening relationships and establishing shared goals.

The practices examined here are the building blocks for the indie music scene. The chapter has focused largely on music producers because these are the individuals most heavily involved with cultivating the scene. They have the most to gain and to lose from its sustainability. Not all performers were equal in their commitment level, however, nor will most bands ever make it past the band festival stage as opening acts. Through the accumulation of experience making music, a select few identify a desire to pursue music further as professionals, while the majority move on to other long-term commitments.

Bali's indie scene has gained a sense of stability and cohesiveness that has come through the practices of some of Bali's most dedicated musicians and music professionals. What was once a scattering of stance cultures (Berger 2009) loyal to specific genres and opposed—sometimes violently—to others (Baulch 2007), has coalesced into a local scene supportive of a professional music industry that embraces a diversity genres and combinations of genres. In 2009, Dethu was optimistic about the future for Bali's best bands: "Because here, now the situation is good. In the beginning, as usual with the underground, I mean, when [the music] came, there was a gap: Metal

couldn't get along with punk rock, let alone with pop. So there was metal, on its own as a faction, and, there was a punk faction, and so on. But now it's already good, for the last two, three years, everyone is equally growing up together, and the veterans are already all grown up" (Dethu, interview, 2009).²⁵

The professional commitments made by a select few of these veterans is key to understanding why the scene has continued to flourish, despite personnel turnover, venue closures, and Bali's isolation from Indonesia's music industry heartland in Jakarta. When I asked Bobi, SID's vocalist what he found most exciting about the scene in 2009, he replied "In Balinese we say, *nyakcak* [awesome].²⁶ I am amazed myself that yes, there are new bands and they are active there. They make their own songs at their own expense, make their own albums and release the albums themselves. That's great. And they have a strong spirit. That's what we see in bands now" (Bobi, interview, 2009).²⁷ Bobi's comment suggests that through dedication and a strong work ethic, bands could overcome any obstacles to creating music. No band has proven that as consistently than his own.

²⁵"Karena di sini, di sini bagus di sini sekarang situasinya. Karena awal-awalnya dulu biasalah maksudnya... Ketika paham tentang underground itu datang, itu ada *gap* ya. Metal ga temenan sama punk rock apalagi sama pop. Pokoknya ada di metal sendiri di dalamnya ini ada kubu A, ini ada kubu B, gitu. Sekarang udah, sudah bagus sekarang, dua tahun, tiga tahun belakangan ini udah sama-sama gede ya, *veteran-veterannya* sudah gede semua."

²⁶ *Nyakcak* was a term I often heard scene participants use to describe a great performance, album, or other music-related accomplishment. It is a Balinese slang term that, in similar English slang phrases, may be translated to "killing it," "totally awesome," or "sick."

²⁷ "Bahasa Balinya *nyakcak*. Sangat kagum ya kalau saya sendiri, ada band yang baru ada mereka aktif, mereka buat lagu sendiri dengan biaya sendiri. Mereka membuat album sendiri dan diedarkan sendiri bagus sekali, dan mereka tuh semangat masih besar, dan band-band sekarang kita lihat sih band-band sekarang."

Chapter 4: “Jadilah Legenda” (Become a Legend)¹: Professionalism & Praise for Bali’s Rock Elites

“So it happened like this, in the case of SID: We were actually really helped by the first bombing. That was one of the factors that gave us an advantage. The benefit was that, although we actually would have chosen not to have it happen that way, after the bomb, all eyes were on Bali. Everyone wanted to support Bali. After the bombs there were many music events in Bali, including really big ones, like Bali for the World. SID always joined, but we were still like nobody back then. But at first, for the Balinese people, they experienced SID’s spirit through our performance, you know? This band represented the spirit of Balinese people to never give up. So from there, from the feedback of that huge audience—and the show was broadcast on TV everywhere—from there, the major labels in Jakarta became interested in us. It was one of the important events that helped us to be recognized by the labels. Well, after the bomb, SID joined a major label, and music—not only in Bali, but in Indonesia—was really different. Bands that could never join a label before SID, like underground bands, could now enter the mainstream labels. We were the first. And after that, labels in Indonesia started looking for bands similar to SID. Burgerkill and Rocket Rockers joined Sony, and after that Navicula and The Hydrant got the chance to join major labels. And that was the bomb’s affect. Not just in Bali but throughout Indonesia. And then it opened up opportunities for many bands. It turns out that in Indonesia it’s not only mainstream bands [that succeed]” (Jerinx, interview, 2009).²

In the weeks and months that followed the 2002 bombings in Bali, which killed more than 200 people, severely injured another 200, and ripped apart several

¹ Song by Superman Is Dead, *Sunset di Tanah Anarki* (2013).

² “Jadi gini loh. kita itu, jadi kasusnya, contoh kasus SID...Sebenarnya tertolong sekali oleh bom kemarin itu, itu salah satu factor kita dapat kayak *advantage*, keuntungan di sana walaupun kita sebenarnya memilih tidak dapat kayak gita karena sebenarnya setelah bom kan *the whole world* matanya ke Bali semua, *all eyes on Bali and everyone wants to support Bali*, setelah bom itu banyak ada *music event* di Bali and *big really big one* Bali, Bali for the World, apa namanya *support* Bali. Jadi SID *always play we were still like nobody back then*, tapi pertama, apa namanya di sana masyarakat Bali mereka tu melalui *perform* disana tuh *they see spirit in SID, you know? This band represents* semangat orang Bali untuk *never give up*. Ya dari sana tu *so many positive feedback audience and the show on TV everywhere*, and dari sana *the label, major label* di Jakarta *interested in us*. Itu *one the big point* bikin kita jadi dikenal oleh label, nah setelah bom itu SID masuk *major label* jadi musik bukan cuman di Bali saja di Indonesia *is really different*. Belum pernah ada band yang sebelum SID tuh underground band yang bisa masuk *mainstream label* [SID was actually the first underground rock band to get signed to a mainstream label], *we were the first after* that label di Indonesia mulai mencari band-band yang sejenis dengan SID akhirnya ada Burgerkill dan ada Rocket Rockers yang masuk ke Sony terus ada Navicula yang juga sempat ke major label dan ada The Hydrant juga sempat dari sana tu perubahan efeknya, bom itu. Bukan cuman Bali aja tapi efek untuk Indonesia juga banyak band-band juga yang buka mata, ternyata di Indonesia juga mereka band-band yang tidak mainstream.” See “Chapter 4” in the research blog to hear an audio excerpt of Jerinx’s comments on Superman Is Dead’s career success in post-bomb Bali (<http://baliunderground.com/chapter-4/>).

entertainment venues in central Kuta, hundreds of businesses closed and the number of foreign visitors to Bali instantly nosedived. The bombings impacted residents of Bali in diverse ways: In addition to resulting in the loss of human life, the bombings devastated the local economy and many individuals lost their livelihoods and could no longer provide for their families. Nonetheless, the absence of wide-ranging, retaliatory violence against Muslims—despite predictions that the bombings would worsen relations between Hindu Balinese and Muslim *pendatang* (newcomers)—enabled the crucial healing process to commence and embrace residents of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds. As Jerinx noted, the public events held immediately after the bombings, including interfaith healing ceremonies and large-scale music concerts, attracted national and international media attention which, in a chain of related events, enabled local bands to accelerate their professional careers.

No other band was as directly impacted by the 2002 bombings as Superman Is Dead: Jerinx's venue Twice Pub, which had been running since 1999 and housed his band's rehearsal space on the second floor, was located just seventy-five meters from the first bomb site. Jerinx and friends were in the bar when the bombs exploded. They were trapped inside due to damage to the main exit door caused by the blast. Suffering other significant structural damage and with no electricity access in the neighborhood, Twice immediately closed. It reopened the following year in a new location on Jalan Poppies II. SID was actively involved in various post-bomb charity events, including a massive televised music concert, Bali For The World, held at the tourism development project, Garuda Wishnu Kencana, on the Bukit Peninsula. As Jerinx explained, their performance caught the attention of major label Sony Music Indonesia. For the first time the label, in

consultation with SID's manager at the time, Rudolf Dethu, offered a contract to an underground rock band. SID's accomplishment marked a crucial turning point for rock bands' roles both in the local and national recording industries.

Igo Blado's explanation for how the bombings became a catalyst for the local music industry's development concurs with Jerinx's:

"I see it like this: So after the first bomb, the nation was largely focused on recovering Bali. Large concerts were staged, and all of the big bands [from Jakarta, Bandung, etc.] were brought here as a gesture of sympathy and to improve conditions, brighten spirits, etc. The only Bali band that was well known at that time was Superman is Dead. And for sure, they were the most capable to represent Bali because they already had a big fan base in Bali. They had already released three albums independently. So if compared to other bands, they were the biggest. And they deserved to represent Bali, because of their large fan base. And from there—because it happened that a lot of well-known [national] bands played—Superman is Dead played really well. Naturally, it all stemmed from there. So yes, arguably [the bombings] were one of the [defining] moments. Eventually, SID was picked up by Sony, and under contract with Sony, they released their album nationally. And it was a success... They became a new icon in the history of Indonesian rock. And it makes sense that after Superman is Dead managed to become an icon, a lot of young people realized that Balinese bands could really make it. There was a new option. In the beginning, this wasn't possible. Typically, before [the bombings], bands were marginalized; they could only play in local bars [*kafe*]. That was actually the peak [of professionalism], in the beginning. But this was actually the starting point for Balinese music artists to create their own works."³

³ "Kalau saya melihatnya seperti ini: Jadi ketika setelah bom pertama, nasional punya fokus besar terhadap *recover* Bali saat itu. Dan itu udah dibuatin konser dimana semua band besar didatangkan ke sini untuk sebuah bentuk simpatik dan memperbaiki kondisi, memberi semangat, segala macam. Dan band Bali yang ikut waktu itu adalah Superman is Dead salah satunya. Dan memang dia yang paling mampu mewakili karena punya fanbase yang sudah besar. Dia sudah punya tiga album yang dia rilis sendiri. Ya dibandingkan band yang lain belum ada gitu ya. Dan memang pantas untuk mewakili. Fan base nya sudah besar. Dan dari sana... karena kebetulan banyak orang besar, band besar yang datang dan Superman is Dead bermain bagus banget. Wajar dari sana berakar semuanya gitu ya, bisa dibilang salah satu momen. Akhirnya dia diambil oleh Sony, bekerja sama dengan Sony, dirilis secara nasional. Dan berhasil. Seperti Dethu tadi bilang, penjualannya berhasil. Menjadi ikon baru yang dalam sejarah rock Indonesia. Menjadi ikon baru. Dan wajar, setelah Superman is Dead berhasil menjadi ikon, semua anak muda baru sadar, di Bali baru sadar bahwa ternyata musik itu bisa. Ada sebuah pilihan baru. Kalau dulu ndak. Angkatan sebelum itu, main band ujungnya hanya main di kafe. Itu sebenarnya, puncak, eh awal, titik awal seniman musik Bali mulai membuat karya sendiri."

Igo's statement suggests that SID's existing fanbase and their facility (Berger 2009) in live performance earned them the privilege to be the first Balinese band to achieve national success. Following their success, bands Navicula and The Hydrant—not to mention the Bandung and Jakarta underground bands Burgerkill and Rocket Rockers that Jerinx mentioned—quickly followed suit for two reasons: Firstly, as Jerinx noted, major labels first recognized the market potential for rock music after seeing audience response to SID's performance. Secondly, as Igo commented, SID set a new benchmark for bands to imagine professional careers in music, including signing a recording contract with a major label. Later in our conversation, Igo clarified that SID was not the first underground band to attempt to “go major.” They were, however, the first to succeed. “And from there,” Igo added, “if we trace back to 2003, then Navicula came straight out and got serious right away. Everyone got serious. And when seriousness emerged, automatically the music got much better.”⁴ Igo's comment suggests that being able to imagine a professional career impelled musicians to take their work (*karya*) seriously. This, in turn, led to improvements in musical quality.

In post-bomb Bali, bands like SID, Navicula, rockabilly group The Hydrant, and rock band Lolot (a band that notably performed their songs in the Balinese language, rather than the lingua franca, Indonesian) each enjoyed commercial success. In 2004, SID and Navicula secured multi-album recording contracts with Sony Music Entertainment Indonesia, and The Hydrant signed with EMI Indonesia in 2007. They produced new studio albums, celebrated high album sales in the early- to mid-2000s, and gained

⁴ “Dan dari situ kalau kita runut kan, dua ribu tiga langsung keluar ada Navicula, langsung serius, semuanya serius. Semua menjadi serius. Dan ketika keseriusannya muncul, otomatis karyanya akan baik sekali.”

impressive followings that extended far beyond the island's shores: SID and The Hydrant boasted a fanbase in Australia, and all four bands toured throughout urban centers in Java. In post-bomb Bali, many large companies selling products for the domestic market also began turning to Balinese bands to perform at their promotional events—whereas in the past they would have flown in a band or artist from Jakarta. Major international motorcycle brands, for example, invited young indie acts like Discotion Pill or Scared of Bums to support their promotion events for store openings, sales, or other marketing campaigns. While the end goal for the companies sponsoring these types of events was simply to sell more motorcycles, for the musicians who played, these commercial events were provided much needed gig fees and gave them a platform to strengthen and grow their fanbase.

While in other underground music contexts, such successes may have earned these bands harsh criticisms for “selling out” to major labels or corporate interests, in fact, these artists earned praise for carving a niche within the national popular music industry for Bali-based bands to enter and excel (Dethu, interview, 2009). In other contexts, *indie* implies autonomy from major entertainment labels. In industrializing Indonesia in the 2000s, however—and particularly in Bali, where the entertainment industry offers minimal opportunities for making a living—bands did not have the luxury of turning down opportunities to receive guaranteed financial support for their music. Although the indie ideology of DIY (Do It Yourself) was widely recognized and admired, in practice, this creative and professional ethic required constant renegotiation to ensure the indie scene's continuation.

This chapter zooms in on the small number of bands who shared the collective

facility across all domains of practice (Berger 2009) to pursue professional careers in music. It focuses on artists who were distinguishable from so-called hobby bands in order to understand who—in the indie context—constituted the “directing group” that was “empowered to assess the operating situation to note different things that have to be dealt with, and to map out a line of action” (Blumer 1993 [1969], 56). It examines what relationships beyond performance events were key to long-term professional involvement in music. Who should be considered a professional was not a given in post-bomb Bali: there were no preexisting conventions regarding compensation for performance, for example, because, prior to the bombings, no underground artists were paid. This chapter does not take for granted a clear distinction between amateur and professional musicians, nor does it rely on a distinction between paid and unpaid musicians to identify the “masters” of their craft. Rather, it explores the benchmarks for professionalism that were consciously set by individuals working together within the indie scene, and how the (albeit few) success stories reshaped what was theretofore primarily a “stance culture” into a scene that developed and disseminated the “quasi-texts” of a Balinese music industry (Berger 2009, 40).

Becoming a professional musician is not entirely without precedence in Bali: Performers and composers who pursue higher education degrees at ISI are also considered music professionals and often enjoy elevated social status in their home villages, as a result of their educational and artistic achievements. They are often contracted to perform for village rituals, community events, and tourist performances throughout the island, and they are (meagerly) compensated for their performances. Generally speaking, however, skilled musicians in the Hindu Balinese context are not

considered professional musicians. Their performance is part of their obligatory service to their *banjar* (a hamlet's governing body) and a spiritual offering. They receive little or no money in return for their service, and their perceived individual talent or expertise rarely impacts their social status. An exception is village ensembles that achieve notoriety through successes in island-wide competitions. A *beleganjur* (processional ensemble), for example, may achieve prestige (*prestasi*) and prize money (*hadiah*) by taking top honors in an island-wide *beleganjur* competition. Still, other vocations (farming, fishing, or tourism-related employment) were more time-consuming activities for these musicians. If only a small number of traditional performing artists would ever imagine the possibility of becoming professionals, then it follows that performers of less mainstream musics, would struggle to imagine the possibility of a music career.

Throughout this project, I have argued that music-related practices are the primary ties that bind together individuals composing the indie scene. Though other categories for belonging, such as class, age, religion, or ethnicity shape the larger social context for indie music, they were not useful abstractions for understanding subjectivities and social alliances in this context. This chapter demonstrates that, in addition depending upon a collective interest in making music together, the scene's longevity—and the richness of social relationships within it—was due in large part to the professionalization of music-making as “craft.” In an early phenomenological study on craft and consciousness, Bensen and Lilienfeld argue,

“...that major ‘habits of mind,’ approaches to the world, or in phenomenological terms, attitudes towards everyday life, and specialized attitudes, are extensions of habits of thought that emerge and are developed in the practice of an occupation, profession, or craft...The emphasis on craft as a generator of habits of mind is in contradistinction to an emphasis on class, particular social and economic

positions, or occupational interest, which also emerge through the practice of a trade or a profession” (Bensman and Lilienfeld, 1973, 1).

This chapter seeks to understand music professionalization as “attitudes toward craft,” or particular stances toward style that are coalesced by scene leaders to become meta-stances on the texts (Berger 2009)—of music, fashion, merchandise, communication, etc.— that transform music-making from hobby to profession. By examining the frequent, music-related practices of scene professionals, including album production, tours, promotional activity, and media relations and highlighting internal theorizations on professionalism, this chapter unveils a largely hidden expressive culture in Bali, with deep social and creative significance for a particular group of individuals working together. Just as Marvin Sterling focuses on individuals with a “high level of engagement,” in the Japanese reggae scene—and similar to Baulch, who dedicates her study on Balinese reggae, punk, and metal to “elite members”—the “active musicians, event organizers, and community leaders” (2007, 188) within these respective genre scenes, this chapter focuses on individuals for whom music-related practices were a primary preoccupation, with special attention to those who consider it their primary specialization—aka, the professionals.

*“Pengen Maju” (A Desire to ‘Make It’)*⁵

In 2009, the popular indie scene hangout Forrest Club in southern Denpasar hosted an evening seminar called “Indie 101,” in which local musicians were invited to

⁵ The verb *maju* translates to “advance,” but was often used by musicians to mean “achieve success” as a band—either through album production, developing a large fanbase, going on tour, or receiving critical acclaim. As a shorthand for the word’s usage among music professionals, I translate the word to “make it”—a common goal and expression among recording artists in the United States as well.

learn from music professionals from Bali and Jakarta, about how to *maju* (make it) as independent recording artists in Indonesia. Organized by Rudolf Dethu and Robin Malau, former bassist for the well-known Bandung metal act Puppen, the event featured keynote speakers from Indonesia's two largest independent music labels at that time: David Karto, founder of demajors, and David Tarigan of the now defunct Aksara Records. Representing the local scene were Dethu, or the *agent provocateur*, as he referred to himself in the event's press release; Robi and Dadang Navicula; Prima Geekssmile; Sari Nymphaea; Dizta Discotion Pill; Wiz, bassist for The Hydrant; Aji, drummer for Suicidal Sinatra; Ghigox, vocalist for death metal band, Parau; and Rude Boy Dodix, aka DJ Soundbwoy Dodix. The roster represented several of the indie scene's success stories: Navicula and The Hydrant released albums on major labels, but were now working on independent releases. Nymphaea's second album, *Malaikatmu*, was distributed nationally through the national label Virgo Records—the same label to which arena rockers Slank were signed for many years. Suicidal Sinatra, Indonesia's first psychobilly outfit, contributed to a Japanese rockabilly compilation album in 2006, which included such globally renowned acts as Jack Johnson and Pennywise. Geekssmile, Discotion Pill, and Parau were each working on new studio albums which were planned for national distribution. Dodix, who had previously worked together with Dethu to manage SID, Navicula, and punk band Postmen, was building an artistic reputation in his own right as the island's best ska and dancehall DJ.

The program was intended as a crash course in Indonesia's music business, and presentations revolved around the diminishing importance of the major/minor divide, crucial importance of the internet and social networking for self promotion, and core

traits that successful bands share. The latter, outlined by Dethu, included a strong work ethic, unique style, and “rock n’ roll attitude” that would distinguishes them from the mundane pop acts on the radio. The fact that Dethu and Malau organized such an event, that it was well-attended and attracted the country’s most influential independent music labels suggests that being a recording artist—and, more importantly, an independent recording artist, without a major label contract—was a real possibility for rising talent in Bali. While the program painted a perhaps overly optimistic picture of what an artist could achieve through talent, creativity, networking, and dedication—it failed to take into account an artist’s reception by potential fans, the changing tide of musical tastes, or how artists might compete with each other—it had a profound impact on several of the artists who took part.

As the event unfolded, it became clear that most members of the audience were not, in fact, young musicians hoping to achieve the same successes as those on the panel of speakers. They were friends, family members, and fans of the artists speaking. Fans of the indie pop band Day After the Rain, who would perform later that night, composed at least half of the audience. But while the event did not achieve its primary purpose—to educate other bands—it did serve to reaffirm among artists who already considered themselves to be music professionals that they had, indeed, changed the rules of the game for music professionalism in Bali. The individuals who spoke believed themselves to be cynosures who attracted attention, admiration, and replication through their craft. To a degree, they were correct—though few in the audience were attracted in order to replicate their professional pathways, and fewer still would rise to the same level in the near future. The event was a celebration, however, of the scene’s potential. It was an

acknowledgement that a few individuals managed to lift their craft from a weekend hobby to an honorable vocation.

The event also revealed shared stances on what it takes to be a successful musician: Those who succeeded were hard workers (*bekerja keras*), “cool” (*punya attitude*), cultivated a unique style—in terms of their musicianship, fashion, and overall persona—and were smart socializers who knew how to network with fans, other musicians, and (most crucially), the media. Such stances, as they came to be shared, evolved into ideologies to which scene leaders referred when they wanted to explain what it takes to make it. Such stances were influential for the next generation of bands hoping to do just that: Shortly after the Indie 101 event, Nymphaea made the decision to move to Jakarta and try their luck at living, performing, and recording in the national recording industry’s epicenter. Geekssmile secured a distribution contract for their second album release with demajors. The opportunities to make it were not only dependent upon Nymphaea and Geekssmile interacting with senior music industry professionals at this event, but also on their individual agency to take the event’s lessons seriously and pursue previously unimagined professional feats.

Creating a Signature Style

Although the indie scene could be called a stance-prominent culture, in Berger’s terms (2009), which took shape through the interplay of performers and the body of texts they produced—their compositions to their fashion, merchandise, and music videos were understood and appreciated as they emulated artists who had already achieved commercial success—it also introduced a degree of novelty into the body of acceptable

texts. A signature style was a primary preoccupation among indie artists. Superman Is Dead provides the best case in point: In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the band changed the rules of the game for what a successful musician could look like: They cultivated a “bad boy attitude,” symbolized by body tattoos, public alcohol consumption, and an unprecedented fashion sense that simultaneously paid homage to the California surfer punk and rockabilly cool cat. Their impact among fellow artists and fans was tremendous. As Robi noted, “Suddenly, there was this new trend for my generation, and Superman is Dead was booming. They brought this bad boy attitude, like drunk, young, and handsome. It was like the clothing and culture were spiky. It was it California rock style” (Robi, interview, 2009).⁶ Similarly during the early 2000s, at a time when metal, punk, and grunge reigned supreme among Bali’s rock enthusiasts, The Hydrant introduced the hard-slapped double bass and stand-up drum kit; slicked pompadour, skin-tight white tee, and cuffed jeans; and stage Elvis-inspired pelvic thrusts and bone-bending legwork that defined American 1950s rockabilly style. While they were initially appreciated for their novelty in the local context, they were also emulated by other artists and fans. They shifted from fringe to focus to become, in Berger’s terms, quasi-texts (2009). Bali’s top artists took stances like hyper-masculinity, coolness, and rebelliousness and transformed them into aesthetic ideals (or quasi-texts) that distinguished indie from the mainstream.

Of course, if one strayed too far acceptable aesthetic conventions, then one may alienate potential listeners. Discotion Pill, for example, was the first band in Bali to attempt to combine rock music and electronica. According to Dizta, audience response at

⁶ “Tiba-tiba, begitu trend juga, di generasi saya ya Superman is Dead kan *booming*. Mereka bawa *attitude bad boy*. It’s like a young drunk and handsome. It’s like a...busana, culture juga spiky, Californian rock style.”

gigs was often ambivalent and sometimes even dismissive, particularly when the band played for mix-genre events attended by a large contingent of metal fans. Dadang Navicula was easily branched off into the previously uncharted genre territory of folk music, however, when he founded Dialog Dini Hari in 2008: No other underground band was performing this style at the time, but audiences could look to national folk troubadours who predated Dadang, like Iwan Fals and Franky Sahilatua, in order to understand Dadang's performance. Furthermore, Dadang already had an established reputation as part of Navicula. Thus, Dialog Dini Hari's newness was more easily tolerated than was previously unknown act Discotion Pill's. Dialog Dini Hari then paved the way for new folk musicians like Nosstress, who quickly gained popularity after their first live gigs in 2010.

The introduction of folk music into the indie scene had the added benefit of enabling artists like DDH and Nosstress to perform in spaces and events usually off limits to the harder genres of rock, punk or metal. In my roll as festival director for BaliSpirit Festival, for example, an annual yoga, dance, and music festival catering primarily to foreign and expatriate concertgoers who leaned toward genres of world music, Indian *kirtan*, and California new age music, I was able to include Dialog Dini Hari and Nosstress on the lineup in successive years, because their sound was more palatable for this rock-phobic audience. Similarly, in 2014 I convinced festival director and ethnomusicologist Franki Raden to feature Navicula in their acoustic format for his Indonesia Music Exchange, a conference and music expo dedicated to "world music."

A recurring theme in interviews with musicians and music critics invested in the indie scene was a desire to place distance between themselves and the "mainstream" pop

industry, particularly as artists became more deeply invested in building their careers. If this study were to look at only the texts at hand, it may suggest that indie artists shared stylistic common ground with pop artists. In addition to the similar practices of rehearsal, performance, recording, and promotion, pop artists also require a strong work ethic and performance facility. Musicianship was highly valued within the indie scene, and artists and music critics often commented on lacking musical proficiency in pop music.

Regardless of the validity of this claim, technical proficiency in singing or instrument-playing was not absolutely necessary for collegial respect or career success in the indie scene, either. SID's proclivity for punk rock allows them to join a lineage of rock that celebrates a lack of musical proficiency. As Berger explains, "While it is hard to imagine situations in which facility is not present, the meaning of facility and its importance are constructed differently in varying social worlds. The instrumental guitar rock of the 1980s and certain branches of punk music are two straightforward examples of contrasting traditions where facility or infacility, respectively, are valued, but the interpretation of facility is actually a complex issue" (2009, 29). SID gained their reputation, not based on their musicianship, but on their ability to cultivate unique personas that modeled for their young fanbase an alternative way to rebel safely in the sphere of music enjoyment.

Compositional style, too, particularly in terms of song structure, often resembled pop aesthetics. Navicula's "Modern Mantra" from their self-released 2007 album, *Beautiful Rebel* provides a case in point: The song conforms to several standards for the post-blues, pop song form (Owens 2014), including length and structure—the common verse/chorus/bridge composition:

Table 2: “Modern Mantra” by Navicula (2007)

Time: 4:44
Extended intro
Verse
Chorus (English)
Verse
Chorus
Bridge (follows chorus)
Guitar solo
Bridge (repeat “Freedom”)
Chorus

“Metropolutan” (Metro-pollutant), featured on their latest album, *Love Bomb* (2013), deviates slightly in length and forgoes the bridge, or B section, in favor of a repeated “hook,” that ubiquitous, catchy pattern also cultivated in pop to render a song more memorable.

Table 3: “Metropolutan” by Navicula (2010)

Time: 2:40
Very short intro
Verse 1
Hook
Chorus
Verse 2
Hook
Chorus
Verse 3 (varied instrumentation, guitar drops out)
Hook
Chorus (repeats 2x)

A vast majority of the songs on indie album releases in the 2000s conformed to the pop format. Of course, the same could be said for underground or indie scenes almost anywhere. With a closer look at the “texts,” however, there are some obvious differences between songs by indie artists and pop artists. The most obvious example is the lyrics.

Each chapter has featured lyrics for a song by one of the indie scene's prominent bands. These songs not only provide creative contextualization, but they also elucidate the range of topics that appeared on indie albums. While it would be erroneous to paint Indonesian pop in stylistic broad strokes, certain topics, particularly romantic love and personal feelings, etc. that are more common than in indie music. Most interviews suggested that these were topics to be avoided within songwriting in the indie scene, or if romantic love or personal feelings were addressed, there should be an "interesting angle" (Dethu, interview, 2010) that distinguishes such songs from run-of-the-mill pop hits. There was consensus across many conversations that song lyrics should be "substantive" and carry some underlying positive message for listeners. Thus, bands Navicula, Dialog Dini Hari, Nosstress, Geekssmile, Scared of Bum, and others shared in common a proclivity for addressing specific social, political, and environmental problems facing Bali and greater Indonesia, and many artists even encouraged their fanbase to become involved in social and environmental causes, an impulse almost entirely absent in recordings by national pop artists. A signature style, combined with circulating texts that displayed novelty—but still conformed to a sufficient number of the rules governing pop music performance for the music to make sense—were the components of style that enabled a band to make it. These markers of their professionalism combined with compensation for performance, album production, domestic and international touring to perform for wider audiences, media relations, and, ultimately, an elevated social status among peers defined scene professionalism. The rest of this chapter will explore these professional domains of practice.

Getting Paid

Before the first bombings, opportunities for rock and other indie bands to get paid for gigs were rare. By 2008, however, bands that had achieved some level of notoriety—by performing at small-scale community like *banjar* bazaars, *lomba band* (band competitions), and other music festivals—could begin to expect a gig fee for their appearances, particularly at large-scale events (attended by 1,000 or more) with a commercial sponsor. Fees ranged from as little as 500,000 rupiah (approximately US\$50) per performance for opening acts to as much as 50 million rupiah (US\$5,000) for SID. By the point in their careers when bands were headlining (rather than opening) shows, they had already created a technical rider to outline their stage plots and miking and channel needs, as well as a standard appearance contract that explicitly stated their requested fee and other requisite forms of compensation, such as accommodation, transportation fare, food and beverage, and free concert tickets and backstage passes for friends. The rider was distributed to event organizers once the band agreed to perform. More than any other document circulating within the scene, the rider, as a written contract that acknowledged musicians would be compensated for their performances, was an important marker of professionalism.

In order to cover artists' fees, as well as the production costs for large-scale concerts, some sort of government or commercial sponsor (and usually multiple sponsors) was required. In exchange for financial support, event organizers were obliged to feature advertising, product placement, and on-site signage that promoted the sponsoring organizations. Beginning in the 2000s, artists could also earn direct sponsorship by a national brand: Scared of Bums, for example, acquired a 3-year

performance contract with LA Lights. While the contract did not cover album production costs (with the exception of a compilation album released by LA Lights and featuring all of the artists on their roster), it did allow SOB to tour widely throughout Java. While this may also seem at odds with the indie ethic of aversion to commercial interests, in reality, the tremendous expense of staging a live event required such business partnerships.

Occasionally, capable scene insiders also became event sponsors. For example, since 2012, Anom Darsana hosted several annual events, including the Rocktober Festival, the Ubud Village Jazz Festival, and Bog-bog Comic Anniversary Concert at a tremendous personal cost.

An additional means for artists to make money through live performance was by moonlighting in top-40 bands. These cover bands were common in many of the restaurants, bars, and clubs throughout southern Bali catering to a tourist patronage. Top-40 artists were among the few in Bali who are able to work full-time as paid musicians. Such bands played the most popular hits on the global and national charts, as well as classic rock, pop, R&B, and reggae songs and take requests from the audience. The musical versatility and skill of such artists was impressive, and many musicians within the indie scene claimed that working in top-40 bands was also an excellent way to hone their craft.

As artists began to perform on a more regular basis, they also required the support of additional personnel: frequently touring bands needed a tour manager to assist with event contracts and travel and accommodations arrangements. Ideally, business or tour managers were compensated with a percentage of live performance fees. Senior bands like SID and Navicula also hired their own sound technicians to operate the mixing desk

during their live performances in order to ensure that their signature sound is translated at every show. In fact, following the bombings, with the increase in local gigging opportunities, several kinds of music professionals began playing central parts in the local music scene: In addition to musicians, there were music producers or directors, who guided album production; band managers and publicists, who guided artists' professional careers through gigs, promotions, and media relations; recording studio owners, who equipped their businesses with recording equipment to rival Jakarta's top recording studios; event organizers, who were responsible for every detail of putting on a large-scale music event, from applying for performance permits, booking the talent and securing the production company for stage rigging and sound reinforcement, to contracting food and beverage vendors and security; and photographers who captured great concert moments and band's official profile photos. In addition to the professionals directly involved in performance, the indie scene additionally depends upon visual artists to shape performing artists' visual profiles and merchandise. Monez, a graduate of ISI Denpasar who works full time as a graphic artist and illustrator, has designed posters, album covers, and t-shirts for artists like Telephone, Navicula, and rock Bali artist Nanoe Biroe. The centrality of their professional contributions to the scene's professionalism is a reminder that what happens on the stage during performance is but one thread binding together indie scene participants around their shared domains of music-related practice.

While the band manager has served a crucial role for bands like Navicula and Superman Is Dead, not all scene participants are in agreement that this is necessary for a band's career. In fact Dethu, who was behind many of Navicula and SID's successes, cautioned that it is the sound engineer, rather than a band manager, who is the most

essential “additional personnel” for a professional band. How a band sounds on stage, according to Dethu, is much more important than having someone else handle a band’s bookings, tours, and media relations (Dethu, interview, 2010). There is only a small number of sound engineers on the island, and the best (including Anom) are in high demand for live gigs. As Anom explained, becoming a good sound engineer requires many years of on-the-job experience in order to learn how to predict and perceive the acoustics of any setting, prepare miking and speaker placement, and obtain ideal mixing levels (Anom, interview, 2010). Bali’s live music scene simply has not been around long enough to cultivate many professionals in this specialized field.

According to Igo Blado, a musician and professional concert organizer, even the most well known bands do not expect to receive compensation for every performance, however (Igo, interview, 2009). Under certain circumstances—for example, if an event does not have a commercial sponsor, is organized by a close friend and indie scene participant, or is being held for charity—even artists like SID and Navicula will agree to perform for free. Furthermore, no band—not even SID—can expect to make a sufficient living working only from performance, though this is the most important source of revenue, as will be explored further below. Furthermore, almost all large-scale events operate at a loss. As mentioned in Chapter 3, concert organizers often struggle to recoup the production costs because standard entry fees (Harga Tiket Masuk, HTM) must be kept low, in order to attract an audience. Sound technician and concert producer Anom Darsana argued that customary ideas about music as free entertainment are partly to blame: Traditional performances in sacred and secular settings take place in open-air, publicly accessible settings and require no entrance fee. According to Darsana, many

Balinese remain reluctant to pay for staged music concerts, particularly those taking place outdoors (Anom, interview, 2009). An inability for artists or concert producers to make enough money trickles down to other scene professionals like managers, photographers, and visual artists, who more frequently volunteer their services than receive fair compensation. The problem of a lack of financial stability impacts not only musicians within the scene: it also impacts other artists with whom they collaborate. Monez, for example, was happy to assist his friends by designing album covers, posters, and merchandise, but he must also make a living as an artist. He depended upon artists' ability to commission his work for a fee (Monez, interview, 2010). When musicians were not making ends meet, they were often unable to pay him. This does not undermine the stance toward their professionalism, however: Whether or not cash exchanges hands, individuals who contribute their talents toward making music events happen—and who do so as a primary activity in their daily lives—were considered essential contributing members to the scene.

Just as crucial to scene sustainability as professionals willing to work for free is a solid fan base willing to attend live performances—even if they are not willing to pay. Large audiences attract larger sponsorships, which enable such events to continue to occur. Large-scale events should be distinguished from small-scale events organized by indie scene participants, in more than size alone: Most audience members at an “insider” event like these—the Indie 101 event at Forrest Club is one such example—are other musicians and supporting friends, family members, and others whom the featured artists know intimately. Large-scale events must attract a wider audience and, ideally, a band's core fanbase, which will exhibit its enthusiasm for the band and help to ensure future

invitations to perform. Indie bands do not share the same stance on the centrality of a wide fanbase, however, nor do they reach out to fans in the same way: In their heyday in 2008 and 2009, Nymphaea invested a great deal of time and energy into cultivating a loyal fanbase, which they nicknamed Nymphfriends, through invite-only shows, artist meet-ups, and merchandise giveaways. Many bands, like Nymphaea, have formalized fan clubs, though the ongoing enthusiasm for these clubs is generated through active fans, rather than by the band's directed attention toward fan loyalty: Superman Is Dead's teenage, male fanbase is called the Outsiders, while female fans are called the Ladies Rose. Each group operates region-specific Facebook fan pages and supports the band through social media, as much as live performance. During the late 2000s, Nymphfriends met once per week in Denpasar to socialize, chat about the band, and listen to their favorite Nymphaea songs. Sari and her husband, drummer Guzt often attended these fan meetings, infusing the local club with meaningful artist-fan interaction that certainly contributed to its popularity. SID also organizes free, non-music events for its fanbase to cultivate fan camaraderie and positive social action: the band leads beach cleanups and low-rider bicycle rides to encourage fans to bike to their concerts, rather than ride their motorcycles. The visible presence and fierce allegiance of Outsider and Ladies Rose often generates comparisons to Slankers, the fanbase of Indonesian arena rockers Slank. In 2011, Suicidal Sinatra took a bold move to show their appreciation to their fan club by releasing an album titled in their honor and available for free download on the main fan club website. Navicula has also tried to cultivate a formal fanbase, using the term Navictivists to suggest that their fanbase is consciously dedicated to the same social and environmental issues as the band. The name, however, has not caught on among loyal

fans, who still tend to favor Navicula's grunge roots, rather than its activism. Furthermore artists like Navicula, Nymphaea, and Suicidal Sinatra have all struggled to cultivate a local fanbase. They all report better audience attendance and enthusiasm when they perform in Java's urban centers. Nymphaea and Suicidal Sinatra tend to be more popular in East Java, while Navicula's largest fanbase is in Jakarta and Bandung.

Oftentimes, bands must find a balance between how they wish to develop stylistically and what is palatable for their fanbase. Navicula continues to struggle with an idea to explore uncharted musical territory in rock and include calls to action in their activist lyrics with a desire from their core fanbase that they remain true to their grunge roots. Scared of Bums, who maintain a massive following in Denpasar, often complained that their fanbase only seems interested in their oldest songs, and in particular, a single they describe as their "easy listening" track, "Boring." They argue that this anthem for teenage malaise does not sufficiently represent the complexity of their style or more substantive lyrical content. Interestingly, the song was not written about teenage malaise and rebellion at all: vocalist Eka wrote it while he was on bed rest for more than a month, struck with typhus. Other bands, like Discotion Pill claim to not be unconcerned about whether or not their music is accepted by their audience. As Gung Bagus, the band's drummer commented, "Up to them, accept it or not" (Gung Bagus, interview, 2009).⁷ The band conceded, of course, that if no one listens, then there wouldn't be much point in continuing to play.

Gung Bagus's comment points to an interesting conundrum in indie music's professionalization: Artists' popularity is measured by fanbase, rather than musicality, yet

⁷ "Terserah dia nerima apa nggak."

becoming more popular can also create greater distance between bands and audiences, depending upon what they want to accomplish with the music. As they become more adept performers, their inner circles will begin to include other senior musicians and media representatives and will leave less room for face-to-face socializing with fans. They have moved up the professional ladder within the music industry and, thus, share less in common with their fans, any of whom may have grown up in the same neighborhoods and attended the same schools as they did. As artists achieve more power through their musical facility, the ideal of an egalitarian music scene is compromised. What is at stake, in this case, in every subsequent performance, is whether or not professional artist can continue to cultivate a sense of “We” through the inner time of performance (Schutz 1964 [1951]).

As Navicula, Nymphaea, Suicidal Sinatra and even Superman Is Dead began to attract larger audiences in Java and Jakarta in the late 2000s, their local relevance was brought into question. There were, however, a number of artists who exclusively cultivated a local, Balinese audience for their craft. As Chapters 2 and 3 briefly discussed, throughout the 2000s, there were a number of bands performing rock and other genres of music common to the indie scene, but songs were written in *basa Bali*, the Balinese language, rather than the country’s *lingua franca*. Throughout the late 2000s, these artists were largely excluded from the indie scene, for several reasons. Firstly, such Balinese-language artists, whom Dethu called “Bali-Bali” artists as convenient shorthand (distinguishable from Balinesia artists who performed in Indonesian), as a matter of personal choice, rarely hung out or performed with musicians in the indie scene. Secondly, in terms of achieving professionalism, these artists could not realistically have

the same goals to “go national,” because their language choice relegated them to the niche market of *band daerah* (regional bands). Indie bands performing primarily in Indonesian and secondarily in English could not only cultivate a national audience because their songs were comprehensible to potential fans, but they even categorized differently in the national recording industry (on radio shows, music awards, and by national labels) from regional acts. In the 2000s, these artists were either defined by their closest generic identification or glossed over as “indie” acts, thus lumped together with all other non-mainstream rock acts in Indonesia, rather than finding themselves in the same categories as *pop Sunda* or *keroncong*, as Balinese-language acts did. One Balinese language rock band, however, defied the odds and gained a national following with its 2003 debut album: Rock band Lolot sold approximately 55,000 copies of *Gumine Mangkin* (The World Today) and two years later, was named “The Best Independent Band” and “Best Newcomer” at the national television station SCTV’s Music Awards. They accomplished this, despite performing in *bahasa daerah* (a regional language). Lolot was also the first band to expand the generic limits of pop Bali, which had previously been strongly rooted in the nationally popular *pop Mandarin*. Lolot was the first widely successful *rock Bali* act. In 2008, Lolot parted ways as a full band and their frontman, who bears the band’s name, redefined his music as a solo act, still performing his hit rock songs and composing new songs in the Balinese language. The other bandmates created a new Indonesian-language rock band, Rokavatar.

No Balinese language band has surpassed—or even come close—to achieving Lolot’s national success. There are several locally successful rock bands, however, such as Nanoe Biroe, XXX, Bintang, and KiS Band, that have achieved fan bases that surpass

in size those of rock bands like Navicula or Suicidal Sinatra. Interestingly, however, with the exception of Jun, frontman for Bintang, such artists are not active participants in the indie scene, and Bintang's involvement tends to be extra-musical. He frequently works even as an emcee and shares a common hobby with Igo Blado and Ed Eddy, frontman of the now defunct band "Ed Eddy & Residivis," for restoring classic motorcycles. Generally speaking, however, rock in the Balinese language constitutes its own independent scene and a decidedly local fanbase, whereas indie artists have their sights set on national and even international acclaim. None of these acts can accumulate fans outside of Bali, however, unless they can reach out to a wider audience. Album production and touring are essential activities for indie musicians looking to break into the national recording industry.

Album Production

Cassette Shop Encounters

In July 2005, far from the bustle of the city, I stepped into a small, sweltering cassette shop on the main artery of the village of Kerambitan, Tabanan, Southwest Bali, running from the palace to Pasut Beach. I was accompanied by my friend Made Pasek, the shop's owner and vocalist for a local heavy metal band. A dim, bare bulb hung overhead. It hardly lit the rows of dusty shelves stocked with thousands of cassette tapes that revealed the broad history of music in Bali: a mélange of gamelan gong kebyar and angklung, dangdut and jazz, Balinese language pop and recorded wayang kulit. "Just give me anything rock and original," I said to Pasek. After a month of intensive gamelan study, I

was over everything bronze and bamboo and in the mood for the howling and pounding of an electric guitar and drum kit.

Pasek offered me an assortment of recent releases. Among them was a cassette with a decidedly psychedelic cover: motifs of sweeping paisley and art nouveau in garish hues of purple, green and yellow framing an abstract yet unambiguous portrayal of the yoni.⁸ The cassette's provocative cover foreshadowed the even more surprising sounds trapped within its magnetic ribbon: familiar allusions to Jimi Hendrix's guitar solos and the vocals of Chris Cornell or Eddie Vedder, combined with a heavy-handed rhythm. Years later I would know all of the album's songs by heart; and the lyrics, once nothing more than incomprehensible timbral adornments to the instruments, would reveal a depth of social and environmental critique that I would find from no other band in Indonesia throughout my years exploring the dark corners of the country's rock music.

2005 marked my first encounter with Bali's pioneer grunge/psychedelic rock band Navicula. Four years later, I met in person the artists the press likes to call the "Green Grunge Gentlemen." This was just prior to the launch of their sixth studio album "Salto," and I accompanied them on a three-week summer tour across Java. The high school friends who first formed a band together back in 1996 may have cut their teeth playing awkward derivatives of Nirvana and Alice in Chains, but by album number six their distinctive, genre-bending rock and fiercely critical lyrics had lent the band a depth of musicality and raw honesty that would appeal to an audience much broader than their diehard

⁸ A Sanskrit word meaning "vagina" or "womb."

grunge fans in Indonesia.

Consensus across all interviews and casual conversations regarding professionalism in Bali's indie scene indicated that the marker for a music career is to record and release at least one full-length album—and ideally, many. As Dethu argued, the act of committing one's music to a digital format to be printed and sold in compact disc form or made available on the internet for download is the primary evaluative criterion for determining which bands will achieve longevity: "If a band has already released their first album, then my friends and I consider it their first birth. We see their ability to survive" (Dethu, interview, 2009).⁹

Recording music also has the important benefit of shaping a band's reception for future gigs by providing their audience with a reference point: When artists debut a new song in performance—which often did occur—the audience has no previous experience with the song and, therefore, cannot receive the song with pleasure as familiar material, for which the lyrics are familiar for singing back and rhythm familiar for dancing. A new song, in fact, can stop audience engagement dead in its tracks. If, however, fans have had a chance to listen to the music before they see it performed live, then they have a reference point for what will unfold over the course of the song. They will be better equipped to know how to move to the music, and may even be able to sing along with the artists, having committed the lyrics to memory through repeated listening. All artists cited such audience behavior as evidence that the audience enjoys the performance, which, concomitantly, uplifts the performers and encourages their more enthusiastic, spirited

⁹ "Kalau mereka sudah merilis album pertama itu, baru...baru saya dan teman-teman itu menganggap kelahiran pertama. Kita lihat seberapa mampu dia bertahan."

response. Familiarity with the music facilitates those moments of mutual tuning in so coveted in performance.

Prior to the bombings, there was some opportunity for local artists to record albums, thanks in large to the members of SID: Together, they established a local record label, Independent Productions, and vocalist Bobby opened a recording studio, Electrohell Records. While Electrohell has expanded its operation to fashion, including t-shirts, hats, and belts, to the present day, many local bands opt to cut their tracks at Bali's first underground multi-track recording studio. Shortly after the bombings, Bagus Mantra, who had previously invested in hotel real estate and other tourism-related businesses, opened a live event production company recording studio for local bands—and pop Bali bands, in particular, under the same name: Pregina.

In 2007, Anom Darsana signed a 20-year land contract to build a stand-alone studio, Antida Music Productions, complete with separate recording and mixing rooms and a lounge area outdoors for artists. It remains the preferred recording studio for many professional musicians—not only local artists, but also musicians traveling through Bali—for two primary reasons: Firstly, Anom has hired and/or trained some of the most well-respected studio engineers on the island, who help artists to cultivate their signature sound during the mixing and mastering process. Secondly, the equipment lives up to “international” recording standards. Anom purchased his studio equipment in Switzerland, where he works every summer, mixing for large outdoor concerts and other events, and he continues to upgrade equipment with new purchases every year. With regards to the technology of the indie music scene, there is, in fact, an important geographic framing in terms of quality that previously I had erroneously dismissed as a

form of elitism: When one describes a good technology or education as international-standard, one implies that it is superior to the “local” standard in Indonesia, where goods, technologies, and education are presumed to lag behind developed nations. An international-standard education, for examples, means that a school conforms to some sort of international curriculum standard. These schools are private and the most expensive in the country and impossibly expensive for all but expatriates living on inflated salaries and the uppermost fringe of Indonesia’s wealthy. Within the music industry, international-standard technology suggests that equipment (or software) was designed and produced abroad. For all of their attention to cultivating a local audience and taking pride in culture and creativity, musicians also began demanding access to the best assets for making music, including imported instruments and recording equipment—in other words, equitable access to the tools for professional music-making they believe they have earned the right to obtain. Thus, while the professionalization of the scene led musicians, sound engineers, and others to distance themselves from local products by viewing them as subpar—and makes studios like Antida prohibitively expensive for all but the most senior bands, it has also empowered artists to assert their place in a musical cosmopolitanism. Just as Feld notes that “jazz cosmopolitanism as the agency of desire for enlarged spatial participation” (2012, Loc. 511), indie cosmopolitanism may be read as the agency of desire for national and international accreditation via technological excellence, aesthetic competence, and professional “prowess” (ibid.)

Album production, whether in an entry-level studio like Electrohell or premium studio like Antida, requires that a band shift its attention toward the texts of their craft and away from the performance on the stage. Bands accept fewer, or perhaps even no

performances during this time period so that they can focus only on committing the best performances to recorded tracks. This is especially important for vocalists, whose instrument, as a part of the human body, is more susceptible to fatigue. Bands may spend days or weeks in the studio, depending upon their budget and specific aesthetic requirements, working alongside studio engineers, taking and retaking vocal and instrumental lines until the final tracks are ready to be mastered and converted to their final file format. Additionally, the mixing room is an important site for socializing (*nongkrong*), a key domain of practice explored in Chapter 3 which helps to deepen social bonds as well as enable artists and studio staff to build rapport and discuss and sort out the specifics of recording, mixing, and mastering in casual dialogue.

While album production is a means to distinguish amateur versus professional artists, practices within the studio further distinguish the recording novices from experienced artists—as well as artists with a keen ear and attention to detail in shaping the reproduction of their performances from those unaccustomed to listening for or describing preferences in timbre, reducing noise, optimizing spatial impression, etc. Deny Surya, drummer for Dialog Dini Hari and Antida’s senior studio engineer, is better equipped to understand the subtle adjustments in the mixing process that can deliver optimal playback than an artist recording its first track. Deny spends almost every day in the studio mixing and mastering recordings. While he has developed his own preferences for best practices in high fidelity mixing, through which he has played an important role in shaping recording standards in Bali over the last six years, he is also adept at listening to artists’ requests and interpreting their often non-technical language to produce what they desire. Similarly, Dadang, Navicula’s guitarist and Dialog Dini Hari’s frontman,

who has also worked in a recording studio and served as a music producer for albums by other bands, can more carefully explain Navicula or Dialog Dini Hari's aesthetic preferences in the mixing process than someone without that studio experience. Dadang is also frequently praised for his masterful guitar playing and keen ear for subtle differences in tonality and volume, capacities that allow him to play with timbre and sound power both in live performance and in the studio.

Although Antida's engineers are highly qualified and can work together with both junior and senior artists to achieve the kind of post-production sound they want to achieve, some artists prefer to complete mixing and mastering in Jakarta or elsewhere in Java, in cities with more studio and engineer options, so that they can achieve specific post-production aesthetics. Navicula, for example, mixed their last three albums in Jakarta because, according to Robi and the band's former manager, Lakota, they were able to choose from a wider selection of engineers who could interpret and deliver their specific mixing aesthetics. It comes down to a matter of "taste," rather than "skill," and according to Robi, and he believes he is more likely to find someone who understands his taste if he has more options (Robi and Lakota, interview, 2010).

In our conversations together, Anom suggested that most local bands lack the aural perception or vocabulary to contribute significantly to the mixing process and, instead, rely heavily on the studio engineer's knowledge and recommendations. It is also common for senior artists to provide tutelage in the recording studio by producing albums. In addition to Dadang, Lolot's former guitarist, Donny, produced Scared of Bums' debut album, while Igo was music producer for DDH and rock band Ed Eddy & Residivis's first full-length albums.

The recording output for local bands increased dramatically once recording studios Pregina and Antida opened their doors. Below is a comprehensive list of the post-bomb album recordings released since 2003:¹⁰

¹⁰ See a selection of album covers for releases between 2002 and 2014 in the section “Albums and Gigs,” of the research blog (<http://baliunderground.com/albums-and-gigs/>).

Table 4: Indie Album Releases, 2002 – 2014

Balian	<i>Balian</i> (2011)
Devildice	<i>In the Arms of the Angels</i> (2004)
	<i>Army of the Black Rose</i> (Sony Music Indonesia, 2011)
Discotion Pill	<i>Amphetamine</i> (2007)
	<i>Amphe-therapy</i> (2008)
	<i>Universound</i> (2010)
Dialog Dini Hari	<i>Beranda Taman Hati</i> (The Blado Beatsmith for production; demajors for distribution, 2008)
	<i>Lirih Penyair Murung</i> (2010)
	<i>Lengkung Langit</i> (Limited Edition Vinyl + Digital, Raindog Records, 2012)
	<i>Tentang Rumahku</i> (Raindog Records, 2014)
Geekssmile	<i>Jurnal Perang Indonesia</i> (Lonely King Records, 2008)
	<i>Upeti Untuk Macan Indonesia</i> (demajors for distribution, 2010)
Morelia	<i>Sinergi</i> (2010)
Navicula	<i>K.U.T.A.: Keep Unity Through Art</i> (The Beat Magazine, 2003)
	<i>Navicore Neo Rock Club</i> (EP, 2003)
	<i>Alkemis</i> (Sony Music Indonesia, 2005)
	<i>Beautiful Rebel</i> (Electrohell Records, 2007)
	<i>Salto</i> (Zygote Records, demajors for distribution, 2009)
	<i>Kami No Mori</i> (2012)
	<i>Love Bomb</i> (Røde Microphones, Volcom Entertainment Indonesia; 2013)
	<i>Love Bomb Repackaged</i> (2014)
Nosstress	<i>Perspektif Bodoh</i> (2011)
	<i>Perspektif Bodoh II</i> (2013)
Nymphea	<i>Malaikatmu</i> (Virgo Records, 2008)
Parau	<i>Surga Bencana</i> (2006)
	<i>Somatoform</i> (2011)
	<i>Renaissance</i> (Electrohell Studio, 2014)
Scared of Bums	<i>Scared of Bums</i> (2007)
	<i>Let's Turn on a Fire</i> (2013)
Superman Is Dead	<i>Kuta Rock City</i> (Sony Music Indonesia, 2003)
	<i>The Hangover Decade</i> (Sony Music Indonesia, 2004)
	<i>Black Market Love</i> (Sony Music Indonesia, 2006)
	<i>Angels and the Outsiders</i> (2009)
	<i>Superman Is Dead</i> (Sony Music Indonesia, Limited Edited Vinyl, 2012)
	<i>Sunset di Tanah Anarki</i> (Sunset in the Land of Anarchy 2013)
Suicidal Sinatra	<i>Valentine Ungu</i> (2004)
	<i>Love Songs and Stinkin' Cheese</i> (Electrohell Records, 2005)
	<i>Boogie Woogie Psychobilly</i> (2007)
	<i>Los Sinatras: Rock and Roll Not For Sale</i> (Free digital download, 2010)
The Hydrant	<i>Saturday Night Riot</i> (2006)
	<i>Rockabilly Live</i> (EMI, 2007)
	<i>Bali Bandidos</i> (2009)
	<i>Dirty Thirty</i> (2011)
Trojan	<i>Metamorphosis as the Phenomenon</i> (Rottretrevore Records, 2010)

The chart above encompasses all releases by Bali's indie artists, and does not include additional releases by pop Bali or jazz artists or bands recording in the Balinese language, as these artists were not part of the primary study. Furthermore, it does not include the substantial number of compilation album releases, in which previously recorded tracks by multiple artists are featured on the same album, generally around a specific theme. For example, in 2009 bands Navicula and Scared of Bums joined several Balinese metal acts for a compilation dedicated to environmental awareness titled *Green Monster*. In 2014, SID, The Hydrant, Navicula, Nosstress, and Scared of Bums all contributed tracks to *Bali Bergerak*, a fundraising album produced by Antida Records and the ForBali activist collective to protest a land reclamation project in Benoa Harbor.

Taking into account this selection of original releases alone, the number of album releases in last ten years (a total of 43)—the vast majority of which were released without a major label contract—is impressive. A major label, in the Indonesian context, includes not only international majors with a presence in Jakarta, like Sony, Warner, Universal, and the defunct EMI, but also national majors like AIRO, Aquarius, and Virgo. As mentioned above, demajors and the defunct Aksara records were the dominant indie labels during this time period, while in Bandung, the major metal label was Rottretrevore Records.

While self-release was considered an honorable feat, in Bali, being indie did not generally mean avoiding a label contract. This is due in large part to SID's successes as part of Sony's artist roster. They demonstrated that a major/minor label distinction does not resonate within the local music industry, because major labels do not force a compromise on artistic integrity. Thanks to the band management's smart negotiations

and SID's own determination to stay true to their roots, the band has changed very little, stylistically, as a result of signing with Sony. This is a success that writers like Dethu, *Rolling Stone Indonesia* contributing editor Wendi Putranto, and many others have applauded. For Superman Is Dead, the greatest advantage to signing with Sony was not the opportunity to be groomed into becoming a pop celebrity. Rather, it provided them with the capital to continue to produce and promote their albums and ensured each release was distributed nationwide.

Additionally, with few exceptions, artists recognized that major labels do not provide as many benefits as someone outside of the industry may think. A common misconception among amateur artists was that a label contract meant a label would invest the entire cost of album production, promotion and distribution in exchange for a percentage of royalties on live gigs, merchandise, and album sales. In fact, contract specifics vary widely. Some bands that were offered major label contracts were extended nothing more than music instruments, while others secured funding for album production, promotion, and distribution costs for up to six future albums. By 2008, many Balinese artists, wise to Navicula and The Hydrant's experiences with major labels, now recognized that major labels would only invest as long as they were sure they would see a return and may recoup a hefty percentage on royalties for all money-generating activities—in some extreme cases, up to 40%.

Superman Is Dead was the only Balinese rock band to maintain a major label contract through 2014. Navicula's Sony contract was cancelled following a mutual decision to part ways, after their 2003 album *Alkemis* did not perform as the label had hoped. The Hydrant, too, recorded only one album with EMI before returning to their

indie roots. Superman Is Dead have been lucky to cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship with their label, which allows them to maintain nearly 100% creative control over album, merchandise, and video clip production. In 2012 they were even able to hire a manager of their own choosing: they went back to one of the men who helped them to secure their original Sony contract: Dodix. In 2014, SID released their sixth album with Sony and, according to Dodix, they plan to renew with another multi-album contract.

Although several of the artists listed above were able to secure enough funds to produce and print their albums themselves, there remains the problem of album distribution. This is where labels like demajors and Aksara Records stepped in: Though they were not able to front production or promotion costs for bands, they were able to distribute indie albums to the major music distribution outlets in Indonesia, for a royalties fee of around 20%. A looming problem facing major and minor labels, however—and the primary reason that minor labels like Aksara have gone bankrupt—is album piracy and insufficient legal album purchases. The problem was rampant when I arrived in 2008. While in the 1990s, pirated cassettes of popular Indonesian artists were being printed and sold at local markets for a fraction of the actual production costs (often paid for by the artists themselves), by the mid-2000s and the replacement of the cassette with the CD, piracy moved from the markets to the Internet and became easier than ever. One can download unlicensed mp3 copies of songs by almost every recording artist in Indonesia, including non-mainstream acts like those at the center of this study, within days of an album's official release. Dethu and Igo site piracy as a primary reason for the decline in popularity for Balinese language bands: while in fact their fanbase remained the same, album sales dropped dramatically after 2006, when most bands had already made the

switch to CDs. With this major loss in revenue from album sales, many bands—and labels—could no longer afford to record new albums and eventually broke up—or went broke (Dethu and Igo, interview, 2009).

From the perspective of artists and label owners, piracy is a serious challenge to their ability to generate enough revenue to keep making albums. Furthermore, since national album prices remain as low as Rp. 35,000 (USD \$3.50)—below the actual cost of production—there is simply no way to make money from album sales anymore. When he was still producing local bands under his label, The Blado Beatsmith, Igo even experimented with selling an album far below the cost of production, for as little as Rp. 15,000 in order to try to encourage sales. He found a sponsor to offset the cost, but neither his label, nor the sponsor made any revenue from album sales.

Aldo Sianturi, music industry advisor for the national Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy and former Managing Director of Universal Music Indonesia, suggested in our interview in 2009 that the fault cannot be placed entirely with consumers: Part of the reason they download unlicensed copies of their favorite artists is because originals are not available in their home towns (due to poor distribution) or sell out too quickly (Sianturi, interview, 2009). This is certainly a problem for most indie artists, who, due to high production costs, only often only print a small number of albums—as little as 500-1,000—and rarely reprint once the album sells out. Furthermore, one may see an extension of the 1990s trend to share cassette copies of international artists to the modern local market. The problem, however, is that the impact locally is much more direct and devastating; illegal downloads in Indonesia literally rob musicians of their very limited income.

Some artists have reframed this challenge by opting to treat a hard copy album as a limited edition item and entice legal album purchases that way. Special packaging or enclosed band merchandise like t-shirts or stickers can help. In February 2012, Superman Is Dead took the bold step of releasing a special edition vinyl album of their greatest hits. That same year, on the heels of a new production contract with Rain Dog Records, an independent label in Jakarta, Dialog Dini Hari printed their album *Lengkung Langit* on vinyl. To my knowledge, only two individuals with any awareness of DDH's music actually owned record players in Bali at the time. Despite this fact, DDH sold all 300 copies of its vinyl album. While purchasers, including me, could not actually play the hard copy album on a record player, our albums came with a paper insert containing a code for a digital download from the band's official website. Thus, the vinyl album was not used as a medium for playback, but rather, was collected like piece of band memorabilia. This entrepreneurial spirit, similar to the hiplife artists Shipley documents in Ghana (2013), is common among Bali's most commercial successful artists. Shipley writes, "Hiplife's entrepreneurial spirit aligns music-making with self-making, as unknown hiplife artists strive to transform themselves into influential stars" (ibid., 216). Similarly, Bali-based recording artists identify a challenge within the music market and create a lucrative solution, and in the process, strengthen their social positioning as leaders within the scene.

Another option is to forgo the printed CD and release an album for digital download. Purchasing legal digital downloads is still difficult, however, because of the security challenges facing ecommerce in Indonesia. iTunes or Amazon releases have provided revenue for a small number of artists: At the end of 2014, Navicula's iTunes

catalogue included *Love Bomb* (2014), *Salto* (2009), and *Beautiful Rebel* (2007). Dialog Dini Hari released *Tentang Rumahku* (2014) on iTunes, as well as Amazon. Several of Superman Is Dead's Sony releases, including *Sunset di Tanah Anarki* (2014), *Angels and the Outsiders* (2008), *Black Market Love* (2006), *The Hangover Decade* (2004), and *Kuta Rock City* (2003), were all available on iTunes. In late 2014, both Navicula and Gede Robi (Robi Navicula in his solo format) opted to release albums on the Bandcamp website. Sales operated according to the Pay What You Want (PWYW) philosophy popularized in the music industry by Radiohead in 2007: Navicula's *Kami No Mori: A Rainforest Compilation* was offered at a minimum price of USD \$10, while Gede Robi's EP, *Son of a Witch*, could be purchased for \$5 or more. All artists experimenting with ecommerce report poor sales, primarily because most online shopping requires the use of an international credit card—something few young Indonesians have. Due to the difficulties and reluctance of consumers to make legally legitimate purchases, it is not surprising that Indonesians continue to download illegally acquired and distributed digital copies of songs or albums by their favorite bands. This aspect of Internet-direct marketing puts artists on the horns of a dilemma: The Internet gives them greater exposure, and therefore greater market potential, but, until online money-transfer issues are resolved, that exposure does not translate into income for the artists.

Worldwide, as the music industry has necessarily evolved under the new pressures of album piracy and digital downloads, the major labels are becoming less important and new companies with alternative sources of revenue are stepping into the music production arena. In 2013, Navicula, for example, secured a two-year album production and promotions contract with popular surfer and skateboard line Volcom.

While the California-based brand has been superficially involved with live music events and album sponsorship in the United States since 1995 (under the guise of Volcom Entertainment), this was the first time an international clothing brand sponsored an Indonesian album. Furthermore, independent album production continues to be an ideal for many artists and music professionals, as confirmed repeatedly in interview. As Putranto explained, by the end of the first decade of the new millennium, “Now the issue has changed, with regards to the indie labels, because we can do it all by ourselves. We can record ourselves, so it’s closer to the DIY ethos. We can release by ourselves, we can promote ourselves on the Internet, and artistically, in terms of our integrity, it doesn’t happen in permutations. And this has proven to be successful” (Putranto, interview, 2011).¹¹ Some artists, like Prima Geekssmile, consciously reject the goal of training one’s fanbase to be consumers for a band’s products. He explained in our 2009 interview, “It sucks, because we do not want them to buy our products. We do not want them to become our consumers. We want them to learn, we want them to listen. The first thing is we want you to listen to us. Once you hear us, it’s your business if you like it or not. It’s a matter of taste, you know. The important thing is, yeah, you have heard us before” (Prima, interview, 2009).¹²

By 2008, merchandise was a primary income source for most bands, as Igo explained: “The condition right is, well for the last two years, a few bands, including my own [Telephone], actually we can make art pay off, but only through merchandise. It’s a

¹¹ “Sekarang isunya berubah, kalo dengan indie label, kita bisa mengerjakan semuanya sendiri, gitu. Kita bisa merekam sendiri, jadi lebih dekat ke etos DIY. Kita bisa me-*release* sendiri, kita bisa mempromosikan sendiri lewat internet, dan secara artistik gitu, integritasnya juga nggak di utak atik. Dan terbukti bisa berhasil.”

¹² “*It sucks* karena *we don’t want them to buy our products. We don’t want them to become our konsumen we want them to learn, we want them to listen. The first thing is we want you to listen to us.* Setelah kamu dengar kami, itu urusanmu kalau kamu tidak suka atau apa. Masalah selera kan. Yang penting ya kamu dengar kami dulu.”

bit strange, in that way. The cost of a CD is Rp 35,000. The cost of a t-shirt is 75-80,000. But t-shirts sell out much more quickly” (Igo, interview, 2009). In Igo’s opinion, the undervaluing of a music recording is strange, particularly since CDs are sold at a cheaper price than t-shirts. But t-shirts, as a piece of band memorabilia a fan can wear, are more valuable to local fans-turned-consumers. In the 2000s, merchandise—and, particularly, t-shirts—were, by far, the most efficient way for bands to make up the money they invested in equipment, album and promotion production, and touring. High production costs do not only apply to albums, however, and as the cost of cotton skyrocketed in 2010 and 2011, the price of t-shirts also skyrocketed to as much as Rp. 200,000 for the end consumer.

Briefly around 2008 and 2010 many bands were supplementing their incomes by signing a distribution contract with telecommunications companies to create a Ringback Tone, an audible indication heard by a caller, which the cell phone owner purchases from her cellular service provider. Consumers would dial a special code assigned by the provider to purchase a short clip of a song by a band of their choosing. RBT redemption codes were included in bands’ CD liner notes or on band posters or other merchandise. Each cost approximately Rp 9,000 per month. Bands received a small percentage of that monthly fee as a royalty. Unfortunately an advertisement for the telecommunications company usually preceded the low-quality, almost unrecognizable song sample, and of course the mobile phone users were unable to enjoy the recording themselves. By 2011, RBTs had fallen out of style.

Individual artists or bands may also receive clothing sponsorships that provide them with their onstage fashion. Jerinx from SID, for example, has been sponsored by

Dickeys for several years, while Hurley sponsored Nymphaea. By 2014, Navicula had accumulated a total of four clothing sponsors: They receive shirts, jeans, and shoes from Volcom, custom boots from Wayout Rock N' Roll, sunglasses from Eastwood Ltd—which has additionally launched a line of eco-friendly wooden frames branded with the band's name—and shirts and other accessories from local fashion line, SKIN. Such fashion sponsorships rarely come with paid endorsements: Bands simply receive the merchandise for free and agree to wear it periodically on the stage or street. Furthermore, many scene insiders have owned their own clothing labels throughout the years. Dethu, for example, launched Suicide Glam, a rock n' roll fashion *distro*, a music distribution outlet and fashion shop, with business partner Made Parwata, while Jerinx opened the massively popular Rumble Cloth Bali franchise and the spinoff for teenage girls, Rumble Girl. In 2012, he sold Rumble Girl to Suicidal Sinatra frontman, Leo and his wife, Liz Adela. They run the main shop out of Batu Bulan, just east of Denpasar. Shortly thereafter, Leo launched a men's jewelry line named after his son, called St. Lukas.

While no musician I interviewed earned his or her living exclusively from music, most musicians were generally able to support their creative projects through related creative fields. Teaching became an option for several musicians, thanks in part to a supportive expatriate teacher at the Bali International School who took an interest in Bali's music scene: She invited Gembull Navicula to lead drum lessons, Robi Navicula to organize a school garden, and Made Bayak from Geekssmile to teach art classes. Nurdi Geekssmile and Deny Dialog Dini Hari have both taught drums at the island's largest music school, Farabi in southern Denpasar.

Globally, as more artists turn to digital recording software and online file sharing servers to disseminate their music, financing from a major label or corporate sponsor became less important. This had a negative impact both on major labels and minor labels, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia, where revenue from merchandise or concerts will not be as significant as it would be in the United States. Furthermore in the late 2000s, industry professionals like Sianturi were concerned that the quality control and systematization of album production, promotion, and distribution a label can provide is being undermined, to the detriment of album quality. While that may be glorified as an opportunity for artists to maintain control of their music and careers, it also undercuts professionals whose experience in these activities can be helpful for these artists. Without some possibility to engage someone like Sianturi, for example, artists may be hard-pressed to understand the larger picture of fan trends, media relations, or promotional strategies. In Sianturi's opinion (though it was certainly not shared by everyone I interviewed), music labels actually do play an important role, not just by providing the financial support for album production, but because they provide access to other creative professionals who can become important allies for Indonesian bands (Sianturi, interview, 2009).

By the late 2000s, very few artists still expected to make money from album sales. Instead, they relied on gigs as a primary source of band income. In order to be invited for paid gigs regularly, bands now had to prioritize their popularity so that sponsors would support their shows. As Chapter 2 illustrated, despite achieving national (and for a select few, international notoriety), many of Bali's indie artists remained completely unknown by most Balinese. They were largely peripheral to what could be considered Bali's most

high profile forms of music-making: namely, music for Hindu ritual (*karawitan*), music to entertain tourists (both traditional musics redefined, such as *legong* and *kecak*, as well as top-40 bands and DJs). With the exception of Superman Is Dead, local bands are largely part of a hidden soundworld (Frishkopf 2009) particularly to those who live outside of indie music's heartland in Denpasar and surrounding neighborhoods. I have frequently confirmed this when traveling through Bali and describing my research to new acquaintances. On very few occasions did I encounter a Balinese who knew who, for example, Navicula is. In fact, asking the same question in Jakarta, where I currently live, I have more often met individuals who know these artists than in Bali. Therefore, in order to be able to continue making music, indie bands had to expand their fan bases beyond Bali's shores. National tours, following album production, were the next logical step.

Going On Tour

Tours most frequently took senior bands to Jakarta and Java's major cities, including Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Malang, though bands Superman Is Dead, Navicula, and The Hydrant have all toured internationally. Touring was not only an essential means for indie bands to widen their fan-base and distribute their albums and merchandise, but it is also a strategy for strengthening bonds between band members and deepening relationships between artists and the media. Thus, tours help to develop a national network of indie music producers, fans, and music critics. Through strategic social networking during Java tours, a handful of artists were also able to secure production and/or distribution contracts with independent record labels based in Jakarta,

thus ensuring their albums land on the shelves of Disctarra and other music distribution outlets located throughout Indonesia.¹³

Bands often expressed to me their desire to build a fanbase beyond Bali: As Nova from Scared of Bums commented, “Yeah, our plan is to be known out there, not just in Bali” (Nova, interview, 2011).¹⁴ Nova was concerned, however, that the geographical distance between Bali and Jakarta limits the ability for Bali-based artists to go national. As an island set apart from the more populous Java, there are only so many fans that can come to a Bali band’s show. Whereas a Jakarta show might attract fans from Bandung or even Jogjakarta, a Denpasar show will only attract fans from Bali. Thus, Scared of Bums felt very lucky when they acquired a three-year touring contract with LA Lights that allowed them to perform regularly in Java, despite their disease with being part of a cigarette company’s marketing campaign. Nymphaea, too, has taken every opportunity to perform outside of Bali. The band has played shows in Lombok, Java, and Jakarta. As stated previously, by the late 2000s, the band’s largest fanbase was actually in Java, due in part to these tours.

Most national tours take bands to Indonesia’s major city centers, including Surabaya, Jogjakarta, Jakarta, Bandung, and Medan. By 2014, bands SID, Navicula, and DDH were performing in Jakarta several times per year. In 2009, I joined Navicula for its first tour across Java, and again in 2012, when the band travelled into uncommon band touring territory, in the remote interior of Kalimantan (or Borneo). The tour was part of Greenpeace’s campaign to raise awareness about ongoing illegal logging and clear-

¹³ In 2009, Navicula, Dialog Dini Hari, and death metal band Trojan all signed distribution contracts with the Jakarta-based indie label Demajors Independent Music Industry (DIMI), but they did not continue these contracts with subsequent albums.

¹⁴ “Kan rencananya kita lebih keluar gitu, tidak di Bali aja nanti.”

cutting for oil palm plantations in Kalimantan's dwindling rainforests. Forgoing the typical club or festival gigs, Navicula traveled the rough countryside through four provinces of Kalimantan, often riding by motorbikes bedecked to resemble the Sumatran tiger, a mascot of sorts for Greenpeace Indonesia. They perform at local schools, met Dayak elders at community centers, took part in traditional dance and music performances in isolated Dayak villages, and met with NGOs to raise awareness about the devastating impact of deforestation. In order to finance their Kalimantan tour, Navicula's then manager, Lakota, set up a Kickstarter campaign to crowdfund the required budget. Thus Navicula achieved another first: They were the first Indonesian band to secure funding for their professional pursuits using an online crowdfunding platform.

Without a doubt, one of the greatest sources of pride for Indonesian bands is the opportunity to tour outside of Indonesia. While tours to Australia or Malaysia earn bragging rights, nothing is more coveted than the opportunity to tour the United States. Yet several of Bali's bands have accomplished that feat: In 2009, Superman Is Dead became the first Balinese rock band to tour the United States when they earned a spot on the famous Vans Warped Tour, touring nine cities with label support from Sony. The band added more gigs to their schedule for a combined sixteen-city tour, thanks to sponsorship support from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Bali (Kementrian Pariwisata dan Budaya). That same summer, rockabilly band The Hydrant set off for the unexpected destination of Slovakia to perform at the Pohoda Festival. Vocalist Marsello met the festival organizer when he was on vacation in Bali, and a fast friendship evolved into a European tour. Marsello waxed nostalgic when he recounted the journey and their

reception in Eastern Europe: “I get chills when I flash back to that tour. We wore traditional Balinese outfits from the waist down—the *kamben poleng* (checkered sarong)—on our walk to the festival” (Marsello, interview, 2013). On the night they performed, Marsello donned Balinese *baris* warrior dance costume—though replacing the lavish gold headpiece with the signature pompadour—and the band played for a crowd of 35,000 and beguiled the screaming rockabilly converts with two encores.

In 2011, Navicula narrowly missed a chance to tour the US when they were selected as finalists in the Hard Rock Battle of the Bands competition. They lost out to Jakarta band Gugun Blues Shelter. Several months after the Hard Rock Battle of the Bands competition, Navicula got the good news that they had earned a spot at Quebec’s Envol et Macadam alternative rock festival. As with Hard Rock Global Battle of the Bands, the competition was decided through online voting. While in Canada, Navicula also made appearances at small gigs in Toronto before returning to Indonesia and heading directly to Kalimantan for their tour with Greenpeace.

Navicula’s crowning achievement would come in 2012, when they took top honors for an international band competition launched by the preeminent microphone and audio accessory company, Røde Microphones. They won by submitting a music video for their song, “Metropolutan,” which featured a requisite Røde microphone in studio footage in the video. While victory for an Indonesian act in an online voting competition may seem unsurprising, given the country’s unmatched obsession with the social media through which competition votes were cast, Navicula’s placement in the finals was determined by a panel of expert judges, including Matt Sorum (Guns N’ Roses and Velvet Revolver), David Catching (Queens of the Stone Age) and Howlin’ Pelle

Almqvist (The Hives), who handpicked the ten finalists from more than 500 acts from 43 countries. As the competition winners, Navicula received a recording contract at the Record Plant, Hollywood, whose halls are haunted by such historic rock legends as Jimi Hendrix, John Lennon and Michael Jackson. There they will work with famed rock producer and consultant Alain Johannes, who has shaped albums by modern rock legends including Queens of the Stone Age, Arctic Monkeys and Chris Cornell. For other bands in Bali, Navicula is something of a modern myth turned reality: a band from a developing country marginalized by an America-centric music industry managing to breach its walls and invade its home territory, without compromising the musical ideals and social ethics that define them. In so doing, they have carved a path for other likeminded bands to imagine they can follow—or alternatively, demonstrated the creative independence needed to carve a path into other uncharted territories.

By the end of 2014, no rock band in Indonesia had toured internationally as extensively as Navicula. When we discussed their aspirations to tour abroad in 2010, Robi and Lakota both claimed that the band wasn't really interested in the idea of touring abroad, if all that meant was performing in front of a foreign audience. Navicula already does that in Bali, Lakota explained, whenever they perform in a bar or other venue packed with foreign tourists or expats. Rather, if they were to tour abroad it would be as much a means to build their reputation in Indonesia and attract national media attention for the causes they believe in as it would be about the specific venues or any money they would hope to make (Robi and Lakota, interview, 2 May 2010).

Meeting the Media

While international tours were a crowning achievement for only a select few, many of Bali's top acts have played in Jakarta. Several performed in Indonesia's capital as often as several times per year. But more important than the possibility to build a fanbase in Jakarta was the opportunity to meet face-to-face with representatives from national news and entertainment media. In the late 2000s the illusion of an independent music scene able to thrive untethered from mainstream media was still an undercurrent within Bali's scene. Most professional musicians, however understood and appreciated the importance of gaining media attention, not only to further their commercial success, but also to help broadcast the image they wanted to convey to a broader fanbase, as well as potential record labels and sponsors.

Reaching out to media in the capital was important, not only because their audience was much more expansive than that of local media in Bali, but also because local media did not offer sufficient, high quality coverage on local artists and events. While the island's news dailies *Bali Post* and *Radar Bali* covered larger music events, they did not feature band profiles or album reviews and, according to Dethu, wrote with little expertise about music. Despite this fact, local news media were certainly valued within the scene, if only for the advertising potential they could offer for upcoming events, as the most widely circulated newspapers in Bali. The *Bali Daily*, a subsection of the Jakarta Post, was also an important section for bands to advertise to a primarily English-speaking, expatriate audience. *Beat Daily*, a publication mentioned in the previous chapter for being a long-time rock music supporter had changed its format by

2008 to focus exclusively on venues paying for advertising in the free, biweekly entertainment magazine. Local bands rarely received free coverage in the magazine, unless they were playing an advertising venue. *Bali TV* has also sporadically featured an indie hour, and Pregina's founder, Bagus Mantra, launched a local television station titled *Bali Music TV*. Unfortunately viewership for these two television outlets has been quite low for indie bands.

Between 2006 and 2012, a music enthusiast and former journalist at *Bali Post*, Made Adyana, personally funded a magazine dedicated exclusively to Bali bands, including pop Bali and indie acts: *Bali Music Magazine* was a monthly publication printed on uncoated, low-grade paper (but with a full color cover) and featuring band, album, and concert reviews, editorials on the music scene, and even chord progressions for songs by local artists. Unfortunately, Adyana could not keep up with the production costs, and after attempting to take the magazine to digital, it folded in 2012.

For much of Bali's popular music history, radio stations—not only in southern Bali, but throughout the more densely populated regions of the island—have played a central role in disseminating songs by local bands to a wide local audience. By 2008, radio stations featuring regular “indie” hours or programs dedicated to local rock bands included The Beat Radio, FBI, Oz, Phoenix and Bali Radio. The Beat Radio, an offshoot of The Beat Magazine, often featured special programs deejayed by local, well-known artists and maintained a long-running rock music program, curated for many years by the station's music director, none other than Dethu. Phoenix Radio often provided media sponsorship for local gigs, and beginning in 2012, both FBI and Bali Radio occasionally featured live broadcasts and social media coverage from local events.

Although the post-bomb music scene presented more local gigging opportunities and recording studios, for bands who wanted national or international reputations, they would need to attract media in the national music industry's epicenter: Jakarta. Until very recently, most Indonesian print and broadcast news and entertainment media marginalized and restricted non-mainstream popular music—and particularly, rock. The postcolonial government of Sukarno denounced such music as an expression of “Western decadence,”¹⁵ and thus, mainstream media declined to promote domestic rock musicians. According to Putranto in his publication on Indonesia's music business, even under Soeharto's authoritarian regime, which tended to be more receptive to influences, “[It was] very difficult to promote music if we were amateur or, say, independent musicians. In the old days, all artists or bands were still very dependent on major labels, television stations, radio, newspapers, and magazines if they wanted to popularize their music on a national stage” (2009, 96).¹⁶

An important exception was *Aktuil*, Indonesia's first music magazine, which released its first issue on 8 June 1967. This date is significant, because it actually preceded the first release of *Rolling Stone* magazine in the United States on 9 November 1967 (Putranto, interview, 2010). *Aktuil* was published by Bandung-born Denny Sabri, a governor's son who enjoyed a privileged university life in the 1960s in Europe. While in Europe, Sabri saw rock legends like Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin perform, and he intended for *Aktuil* to be an outlet for him to share his passion for these rock bands with an Indonesian audience. *Aktuil* was an important catalyst for Indonesia's first generation

¹⁵ See Luvaas (2009, 249-250) and Lockard (1998, 77).

¹⁶ “Sangat sulit sekali untuk mempromosikan musik jika kita adalah musisi amatir atau katakanlah independen. Jaman dulu semua artis atau band masih sangat tergantung dengan major label, stasiun televisi, radio, surat kabar, dan majalah besar jika ingin memopulerkan musik ke pentas nasional.”

of rock bands to take shape and explore the heavier genres of rock music, including acid rock and heavy metal. The magazine also organized Indonesia's first international rock concert in 1975, when Deep Purple performed for a two-day music festival at Stadion Utama Senayan, Jakarta. More than 150,000 people attended the concert, making it the largest music concert in Indonesia to date. Sadly, the festivities turned tragic on the first day when police overacted to spirited dancing by spectators and began severely beating and arresting young boys in the audience. One of Deep Purple's crew members was also killed after a fall down an elevator shaft at their hotel. While Deep Purple has since gone on record to describe their tour to Indonesia as a "nightmare" (Crescenti 1976), their performance in Indonesia had a tremendous influence on the local music scene. It also solidified the importance of magazine publications in not only reporting on the local music scene, but actually facilitating some of its greatest events.

Aktuil was a rare exception to mainstream news and entertainment media, however. Therefore, during the 1990s, underground music producers turned to grassroots media like mail-order catalogs, fanzines, and shared cassettes to share their musical knowledge (Wallach 2005, 18). In the early part of that decade, media deregulation brought international recording companies and MTV to Indonesia (Baulch 2007, 5), which enabled young musicians and fans unprecedented access to their favorite performing artists from the West.

By the 2000s, a number of monthly entertainment magazines, including *Hai*, *Trax*, and *Rolling Stone Indonesia* at the top of the food chain, provided regular coverage of Indonesia's rock and other non-mainstream acts. *Rolling Stone Indonesia*, in particular, is considered the preeminent authority on local rock music, though as a subsidiary of the

American publication, more than 50% of its coverage must adhere to the magazine's global features. Bands SID, Navicula, The Hydrant, and Dialog Dini Hari have all featured in the magazine. In 2009, Putranto wrote a 5-page feature article on Navicula to coincide with their album launch. Later in 2013, following the band's Røde Rocks victory, the magazine named Navicula "Indonesia's Rock Ambassadors."

In addition to widening their fanbase and giving them exposure for potential record labels and sponsor, media attention can help bands to achieve national accolades through annual awards competitions. In Indonesia, there are two primary national music awards: the Anugerah Musik Indonesia awards, or the AMIs, are colloquially known as the Indonesian Grammys. The AMIs tend to give preferential treatment to mainstream pop artists and *musik daerah*. As of 2014, only guitarist Balawan and Superman Is Dead were awarded AMIs: Balawan won in the "Best Instrumental Jazz Album" category for *See You Soon*, while SID earned awards in 2003, 2006, and most recently in 2014, when they took home the award for best rock band or duo. The Indonesian Cutting Edge Music Awards (ICEMA) is a biannual awards program that was first established in 2010 and tends to privilege non-mainstream indie and rock acts. In 2014, Putranto served as head of the jury that selected the artists for final voting. Unlike the AMIs, where a panel of expert judges selects the winning artists, fans pick ICEMA's winners through online voting. In the 2010 ICEMA's, SID won in more categories than any other band, taking the top spot in the categories for Best Punk/Hardcore Song, Favorite Artwork from Album for *Angels and the Outsiders*, as well as Favorite Band Group or Duo. Navicula was first honored at the ICEMA's in 2012 with nominations for Favorite Song with "Metropolutan" and Favorite Group Band/Duo. That same year, Dialog Dini Hari was

nominated for favorite folk song with “Lengkung Langit,” the title track from that year’s album release, as well as Favorite Folk Group or Duo. The Hydrant was also nominated in 2010 and 2012. Most recently in November 2014, Navicula was once again in the running for the Best Rock Track category for “Love Bomb.” Metal act Parau was nominated in two categories, for Best Metal Track and Favorite Group, Band, or Duo. Dialog Dini Hari was nominated for Favorite Group, Band, or Duo and Favorite Folk Track for the title song from their 2014 release, “Tentang Rumahku” (About My Home). All artists also competed against each other in the cross-category grand finale to win Most Favorite Track.

More than magazines, radio, television, or industry awards, the Internet has played a central role for music reporting. Throughout the 2000s, young artists could access more diverse music content than ever before, including previously elusive genres of experimental rock. Thus, one could argue that the Internet, as a resource for developing musical novelty, directly contributed to Indonesian popular music’s expansion beyond “blatant imitation” (Luvaas, 2009, 252) of foreign acts nourishing true artistic innovation. Furthermore, readers no longer need to wait for a magazine or fanzine print edition to learn the latest music news. Print media with an online edition, as well as exclusively online publications, now provide nearly up-to-the-minute reporting on the nation’s music news.

In 2010 in a Facebook note, I tagged several research consultants and asked them to comment on the impact of the Internet on the music industry in Indonesia. Putranto, one of several respondents, replied: “To me, Internet access, which arrived in Indonesia in the 1990s, has made our musicians much more creative and has [enabled them] to

progress rapidly. Furthermore, after the rise of various types of social media networking sites like MySpace, Facebook, etc., these artists have [strategically] organized and widened their fan base. They prove that without the support of a major label they can build worldwide independent music careers (See, for example, The S.I.G.I.T,¹⁷ White Shoes,¹⁸ Gugun Blues Shelter,¹⁹ etc.). So God bless the Internet!”²⁰

Putranto’s response touches on several emergent themes regarding the Internet’s value within Indonesia’s music industry. He views the Internet as an important new technology that has reshaped music industry praxis, particularly in the field of artist marketing and promotion. Furthermore, it is a primary resource for artistic inspiration, providing musicians and producers with unprecedented access to recording artists worldwide. Finally, for the nation’s top musicians, the Internet can lead to national and even international recognition, by means independent of and, as Putranto suggests, even superior to the production, distribution, or promotional support of Indonesia’s major record labels. Putranto references several Indonesian bands that, largely by means of online marketing and social networking sites, have garnered a following beyond national borders: Hard rock outfit and active bloggers The S.I.G.I.T. released their self-titled debut EP and subsequent full-length studio album *Visible Idea of Perfection* in 2007, jointly with Australian Caveman! and Bandung-based indie label FFCUTS. Over the next

¹⁷ A hard rock band from Bandung named The Super Insurgent Group of Intemperance Talent, known officially by their acronym.

¹⁸ Shorthand for Jakarta-based indie pop band White Shoes and the Couples Company.

¹⁹ Blues trio Gugun Blues Shelter, who took top honors through an online battle of the bands sponsored by Hard Rock Café, took on London in June 2011 for competition’s finale concert at Hyde Park.

²⁰ “Buat saya, akses internet yang masuk ke Indonesia sejak dekade 90an membuat musisi kita jauh lebih kreatif dan berkembang pesat. Apalagi setelah maraknya bermacam2 [sic] social media networking sites seperti MySpace, Facebook, dsb [sic] artis-artis ini jadi lebih terorganisir dan meluas fanbasenya. Mereka bisa membuktikan bahwa tanpa dukungan major label pun mereka bisa membangun karir musik independen yang mendunia (contohnya The SIGIT, White Shoes, Gugun Blues Shelter dsb). So God bless the internet!”

2 years, The S.I.G.I.T. toured Australia, the USA, Hong Kong, and many countries in Southeast Asia. Retro indie pop group White Shoes and the Couples Company toured Japan, Australia, Canada, and the USA stopovers included Austin, Texas for a stint at the famous South By Southwest music festival and released their 2007 self-titled album with Chicago-based indie label Minty Fresh Records. In 2008, Yahoo! Music called the group “The Most Blog Worthy Band on the Planet,” thanks, in part, to their US-based hipster/blogger following (Moir, interview, 2011). Blues trio Gugun Blues Shelter, which took top honors through a web-based battle of the bands sponsored by Hard Rock Café, took on London in June 2011 for the finale concert at Hyde Park.

In Indonesia, the Internet helps to level the music industry’s playing field by enabling independent artists and labels to compete with the corporate mainstream though, presently, the largest national entertainment conglomerates largely disregard them and surpass them in revenue (Sianturi, interview, 2010). In communications with me, independent music producers confidently predicted that the Internet would enable them to maintain control over their creative works and expand their audiences.

Nationally, one of the most comprehensive sites for information on underground music in Indonesia is Deathrockstar, a webzine in virtual circulation since 2003. This self-proclaimed ‘Biggest Music Webzine in Indonesia’ reports on both international and domestic rock acts with equal diligence, and has featured many of Bali’s top rock bands. In 2008, Dethu, together with Bandung native Robin Malau, former guitarist for the epic Indonesian metal band Puppen launched the website Musikator which featured articles, editorials, and band, concert, and tour reviews, as well as profiles of the country’s top underground acts. As both founders were based in Bali, coverage was decidedly biased

toward Bali-based bands. Early in the research, this website was my primary resource for identifying the most active performing and recording artists and reading up on their bios. Readership was limited, however, and the coverage labor-intensive (Dethu personally wrote almost all of the entries). Therefore, the website folded in 2011.

As indicated above, thanks to the Internet, the end product of music production is no longer necessarily a material printed cassette or compact disc, as songs are being made available exclusively online for downloading and further disseminated through file sharing portals from both computers and mobile phones. A number of artists opt to release their songs online. A number of websites provide open access to streaming audio. Official band websites, domestic radio and magazine sites, and globally popular radio and audio file-sharing sites such as iLike, SoundCloud, ReverbNation, Last.fm, and Pure-Volume typically stream singles or previously printed and released albums. In 2010, when I accompanied Navicula to Jakarta for a prelaunch of their latest single, “Metropolutan” (Metro-pollutant), I observed how an online release could significantly influence a band’s reception and tour success, particularly if the release is well promoted. Navicula offered “Metropolutan” as a free download on its official website one week before the appearances. The download link was then promoted on Facebook and Twitter (Lakota, interview 2011). Video-sharing websites (primarily YouTube) were also invaluable tools for increasing exposure for indie acts. In addition to sharing official music videos and live performance footage, artists also experimented with video logs (vlogs), providing behind-the-scenes access to the artists during video clip shooting, on tour, and at recording sessions. YouTube, together with Instagram, have enabled the savvy social networking bands to take their visual personas into their own hands and

share videos and images that represent who they are, directly with fans online.

Online social networking was not intended only for casual socializing; for the musician, music producer, or record label actively using them, they are important professional networking tools (Putranto 2009, 97). The vast majority of research consultants communicate daily (and several hourly) through online social media, and Indonesians now constitute the second largest population group on Facebook, after the USA (Lutfia, January 13, 2010b). Social media also facilitate the potential for direct communication between musicians and fans. Much like YouTube vlogs were envisioned as a means to elicit fan commitment, social networking media were believed to draw musicians and fans closer together. Through the interactive potential of MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter, potential fans could feel a part of this rock network, rather than simply consumers of it—particularly when their comments were answered directly by the musicians they follow. In 2011, SID exceeded the impressive benchmark of acquiring over one million “likes” for their primary Facebook account. As a result of their dominance on social networking media, SID was honored as the first Indonesian band featured on the Billboard Charts under a new category that tracks rising acts’ online popularity, peculiarly called “Uncharted.”²¹ As of late November 2014, SID had acquired more than 5,277,700 likes for their Facebook page, and 854,000 followers on Twitter.

In his 2000 article “Music and the Internet” communications scholar Steve Jones accurately predicts a change in the relationship between artists and fans following the invention of the Internet (Jones 2000, 225). Music producers and consumers are, indeed,

²¹ “Uncharted,” described on the Billboard website, is “a listing of the top new and developing artists who have yet to appear on a major Billboard chart, regardless of the country of origin. Ranking is based on a formula incorporating streamed plays, page views, and fans according to MySpace, as well as sources tracked by online aggregator Next Big Sound, including YouTube, FaceBook, Twitter, Last.fm, iLike, and Wikipedia, among others” (Billboard.com, 11 June 2011).

brought into closer social proximity through the possibility (if not the probability) of the two-way communication social networking media facilitate. Bands that managed to foster a sense of social closeness between themselves and their fans increased their visibility and popularity by these means. SID is a stellar example of this. Concomitantly, through social networking media, fans formed their own social alliances with other fans, based on pre-existing community organizations or on common musical interests. They even created thematic Facebook groups like “Outsiders” (SID’s official fan club), and “Ladies Rose,” dedicated solely to discussion of their favorite music subjects.

For indie scene professionals, including recording artists, music critics, producers, label owners, band managers, graphic designers, and photographers, the Internet has revolutionized professional and social communication. Putranto writes, “Blessed is anyone who becomes a musician or a kid in a band in today’s digital age. The rapid development of information technology promises ease, affordability, and speed for marketing and promoting the music that it turns out only needs to be controlled by the mouse we have in our own hands” (2009, 96).²² His observation suggests that for a musician with aspirations to reach a national or international audience, the promotional potential of the Internet, as a comparatively cheap medium with global reach, is unmatched by print or broadcast news or entertainment media. If web-based news and entertainment resources ultimately replace the so-called “archaic media” (Dethu, interview, 2010), then the Internet-savvy artist, who may have been excluded from participation in the national music industry in the pre-Internet era, can now seize the

²² “Berbahagialah siapa pun yang menjadi musisi atau anak band di era digital sekarang ini. Pesatnya perkembangan teknologi informasi menjanjikan kemudahan, kemurahan, dan kecepatan dalam memasarkan dan mempromosikan musik yang ternyata hanya cukup dikontrol oleh peranti *mouse* yang berada dalam gengaman kita sendiri.”

opportunity to make his/her influence felt.

While online social/professional networking contributes to the efficiency and affordability of music business communication, it also expands the geographic scope of the nation's independent music industry. Though Jakarta remains the industry's hub, artists who live outside the capital city can communicate with their counterparts with greater ease. With their online presence, they can still appear on the radar screens of the more lucrative Jakarta-based music industry and culture, in turn giving these provincial artists a stronger footing against their competitors. Most bands that claim international followings and have performed abroad say Internet visibility contributed to their success (Putranto, 2009, 97). Such bands inspire others who dream of going global to begin their journey "Internetworking" (Dethu 2008).

Notwithstanding the online success stories outlined above, in the Indonesian context, a band's place of residence continues to influence its commercial success. I indicated above that the Internet fosters increased demographic inclusiveness: Balinese recording artists were not necessarily completely marginalized in the business simply because they could not meet face-to-face with industry insiders in Jakarta. Artists residing in Jakarta, however, remain strategically positioned for additional face-to-face interactions with music industry professionals. The Hard Rock Battle of the Bands, discussed above, provides a case in point: Both Navicula and Gugun Blues Shelter campaigned exhaustively for votes through online social media. After the competition, I interviewed several people who argued that Navicula, a comparatively senior band with far more albums and critical acclaim among domestic music critics than Gugun Blues Shelter, lost because they, headquartered in Bali, 600 miles from the center of Indonesia's

music industry, could not compete with Jakarta-based Gugun Blues Shelter's face-to-face networking activity in the capital. The Internet has value—and limitations—for facilitating professional communication and as a socializing tool.

The various opportunities for professional success have opened up the possibility for Balinese bands to find some financial stability through their craft. Though no one could earn a living exclusively from music, many were able to make enough money to fuel their ongoing music projects with money earned from music. The payoff was symbolized in musicians' growing instrument collections: Robi who, at 20 years old, did not own his own guitar, now has four electric guitars, two acoustic guitars, a guitalele, mandolin, and acoustic bass. His pride and joy is a restored Gibson Les Paul circa 1970, which he purchased from a friend in Bali and had restored by Bali's own guitar doctor, luthier and sitar player Yoyok Harness. Outside of Navicula, when performing in his duo format, Robi shows off his brand new Goden, 5th Avenue Series or his "new girlfriend," as he affectionately calls it: a Cole Clark Fat Lady. Guitarist Dadang owns a total of nine guitars, including a Duolian-DOBRO resonator guitar given to him by legendary music producer Alain Johannes when Navicula was in Jakarta. He has also amassed ten effects pedals.

Instrument upgrades allow these artists to further cultivate their signature sounds, as Robi explained, "For Ganjil [Robi's rock duo, launched together with metal drummer BJ], I need a hollow body guitar because I play guitar and bass at the same time [using a signal splitter and equalizer]. For Navicula, I more often use a solid body guitar like a Les Paul because we need a heavy and sustained sound in the sludgy songs like "Menghitung Mundur" (Counting Backwards) or "Televishit." I also use a Fender single coil for a

more crunchy sound. For me, I use the Fender Jagstang, Kurt Cobain model” (Robi, interview, 2014).²³

Professional Epiphany

In early 2009, several months into research, I attended a book launch for Emma Baulch’s Making Scene, which she had recently made available in Bali by photocopying the book and disseminating free copies. The launch was held within the walls of a family compound in Southeast Denpasar at the headquarters of Taman 65, a grassroots community organization founded by the surviving family members of individuals murdered during Indonesia’s 1965-6 massacres. As I entered the modest, open-air clearing forming the heart of the compound, I was intrigued by the author’s choice of setting. I expected a book launch for a scholarly text—customarily targeting an audience of scholars—to be held in a setting like a local university and attended by academic peers. Instead, I encountered a mostly Balinese audience, including several of the author’s research consultants for her dissertation and book.

I scanned this archetypal Balinese compound, in which the proceedings of daily life continued at the periphery, irrespective of the gathering happening in the center. I observed a grandmother grinding spices on a stone mortar in the outdoor kitchen, chickens pecking in the yard, a naked toddler bouncing on an older sibling’s knee, and a mother laying a Hindu offering of rice, flowers, and

²³ “Untuk Ganjil aku perlu *hollow body guitar* karena aku keluarin suara gitar dan bass *at the same time*...Kalo Navicula, lebih pakai *solid body* seperti Les Paul karena perlu *sound* yang *heavy* dan *sustain* di lagu-lagu yang *sludgy* seperti Menghitung Mundur atau Televisi...Tapi juga pakai Fender *single coil* untuk *sound* yang lebih *crunchy*...Kalo aku untuk Fender aku pakai type Jagstang, Kurt Cobain model.”

incense at the entryway. The center clearing, however, was transformed into a space for scholarly debate, unfolding in rousing oratories, thoughtful counterpoints, and moments of approving acknowledgement for the honored author's achievement.

During the feedback portion of the event, when the moderator solicited questions and comments from the audience, a public dispute arose. Several individuals criticized the author's representational medium on several counts, but particularly for its inaccessible vernacular: The book was published in English, a language that only a handful in attendance could confidently read; and it employed an analytical prose common to communications studies, but frustratingly convoluted to the majority of individuals about whom the book was written. Several of her primary research consultants, including Jerinx, admitted they had not read the book. They were not uninterested in the subject matter, however; rather, they could not understand the foreign register of this Western scholarship. The audience reached a general consensus that if the book had been written about them, why was it not written for them?

Observing these proceedings, I was astonished by the unequivocal criticism of this carefully researched and theoretically grounded scholarly text. Of course, the concerns about research value and accessibility were also common themes within the publications, graduate seminars, and professional conferences that guided my own research questions and methods. But I was suddenly alarmed that, as an ethnomusicologist pursuing a PhD and planning a career in the university environment, I would also be expected to produce a similar textual

representation for a scholarly audience that would likely have little or no value to the individuals who formed the focus of my research. I was also humbled by the masterful articulation of analytical critique I previously assumed fell within the exclusive domain of academic scholarship. By entering the “field” of scholarly debate, former “subjects” breached the divide between researchers and researched and asserted themselves as “co-theorizers” (Rappaport 2008). These intellectual coequals brought into sharp focus the fact that my university degrees or professional achievements did not permit me a corner on the market of theoretical debate.

That evening, my understanding of my social and professional positioning was sent into a tailspin: I was no longer sure who I was in this so-called fieldwork setting or how I was to proceed with my self-serving intellectual goals. Were we, the countless scholars who passed months and years pilfering social knowledge in Bali, doing nothing more than hoarding that knowledge for the benefit of our own scholarly communities, behind the unbreachable (for many) walls of university campuses? Would I leave nothing behind but an incomprehensible text and memories of yet another curious bumble passing through who asked too many questions and wasted everyone’s time? In true vocational epiphany, I often imagined blindly stumbling along the grooves of a trail cut by predecessors, leading to one destination: high atop an Ivory Tower. I recalled that evening over the next few years, at moments of scrutiny over the pragmatism and utility of my research and writing in “the field,” as well as the professional goals that should lead me “home” and into a university appointment.

At the end of my second year in Bali, I took first foray into what I would eventually call public ethnomusicology both as a method to address research questions within my dissertation project as well as a means to counter the uncomfortable selfishness of ethnographic research: Much like ethnomusicologists who learn to play the music traditions they study (Hood 1960), I took on professional tasks within Bali's indie music scene as an exercise in experiential learning. Operating within the methodological framework of participant observation, I tried my hand at "truly participatory participant-observation" (Barz and Cooley 2008) by engaging with local modes of professionalism. As research progressed, I slid more frequently into roles supporting band management, photo and video documentation, public relations, band bookings, and event production. A shared commitment to the professional activities of the independent music industry deepened my relationships with industry professionals and contributed significantly to my understanding of creative standards, marketing strategies, sound reinforcement and stage production, and concert and touring logistics— topics that fell within the scope of the dissertation. As I shifted gears from dissertation research to writing, I continued to live in Bali and participate in the independent music industry. I regularly secured bookings for the bands that had formed my research focus, assisted lyricists with English-language songwriting, managed merchandise sales at local gigs, and wrote album, concert, and venue reviews for local print and online magazines.

By 2011, with no stable income, I tapped into my academic vigor by making preparations to return to the United States and hop on the job market bandwagon in order to land a university appointment. However, another opportunity—and alternative

career—presented itself: I was offered a full- time position managing the public programs for Yayasan Kryasta Guna, a foundation that mounts education workshops, environmental programs, concerts, and the annual BaliSpirit Festival, a five-day yoga, dance, and music festival featuring Indonesian and international teachers, speakers, healers, and performing artists. In initial job interviews, the foundation’s creators expressed interest in my academic background and what insight I could provide on staging nuanced and compelling presentations of Balinese performance arts. My amateur experience in the local music industry, however—and particularly in event production—was a primary determining factor in my hire.

As a public programs manager (in Indonesia I am called a show director or event organizer), I staged performing arts events in Bali and elsewhere in Indonesia, coordinating all phases of production, including event programming, performer bookings, sponsorships, venue contracts and event and vendor licenses, stage and sound production crew and security hire, and event marketing. Events ranged in size and location from a one-off concert featuring one or two bands in an indoor venue with a 150-person capacity to a multiday, open-air festival featuring more than one hundred performers and an audience of thousands. My work required the hire of a number of collaborators, including performers, a stage manager and crew, sound operator, and others, and I often solicited the involvement of qualified friends with whom I was first acquainted during research. For example, several former research participants composed the production team for the BaliSpirit Festival: Robi worked as my stage manager and Anom Darsana was the head sound operator, in charge of the main stage’s front-of-house mixing desk. He also assisted me in contracting sound and staging rentals for all festival venues, for which we

chose Pregina, the production house owned by Bagus Mantra. Igo worked as a site coordinator, overseeing logistics, operations, and vendors, and Erick created a backstage documentary on the local and national bands performing.

All ethnomusicology involves the application of knowledge about music and culture to some end; but public ethnomusicologists direct their work primarily toward public service rather than scholarly theorization. Aligned with Titon's description of "ethnomusicology in the public interest" (1992), public ethnomusicology values the practical utility of ethnomusicological research, involves co-theorizers, and targets an audience atypical of academic contexts. Public ethnomusicology necessarily involves collaborative approaches: cooperation at the levels of research conceptualization, execution, and presentation is essential to achieving favorable results (Lassiter 2005). In contrast, the professional goals of academic pursuits—such as peer-reviewed publications, academic appointments, or tenure—are largely solitary. Furthermore, the collaborative professionalism of public ethnomusicology tends to diminish power imbalances between scholars and research participants—a postmodern concern within all social sciences—because an individual's higher education is not a prerequisite for participation or guarantee of one's expertise.

As professional relationships in the public sector dissolve boundaries between scholars and research informants, home and field, and theoretical and applied work, they unearth the true potential of collaborative work to produce public scholarship through innovative and diverse modes of "scholarly" discourse (See Peacock 1997, Lassiter 2005, Rappaport 2008, Checker 2009). The university setting continues to reward research and writing directed at an academic audience, however, thus leaving little room for long-

term, engaged public work. But alternative careers are possible (see Davis 1992), and they provide exciting opportunities for the professional work of an anthropologist to become truly collaborative.

Conclusion

“Become a Legend” by Superman Is Dead²⁴

*The winds blow hot, sweat dripping from your chest
Endlessly you work hard, you fight for love
For Indonesia, continue to hold steady
Although you are crushed, hurt, you still stand here
For Indonesia, become a legend, we can and we believe
See the ocean and the beauty of the waves, the swaying palm trees
The girl who begins to dance, the hoisting of the red and white²⁵
For Indonesia, which belongs to all of us, a thousand cultures and the wealth of
nature that will not be destroyed
For Indonesia, become a legend, we can and we believe
Indonesia’s blood, I am your lightning
Indonesia’s blood, the never-ending thunder
Indonesia’s blood, despite the storm you face you will never be lost
Although the storm blocks your way.*

No other rock band in Indonesia has accomplished the national and international acclaim that Superman Is Dead has. The band’s frontman and drummer, Jerinx, is as recognizable in Indonesia as any pop star, model, television personality, or celebrity. By

²⁴ Hembus angin yang terasa panas, keringat menetes di dada
Tiada henti kau bekerja keras berjuang demi cinta
Untuk Indonesia, teruslah bertahan
Walau dihancurkan disakiti kau tetap berdiri di sini
Untuk Indonesia, jadilah legenda, kita bisa dan percaya
Lihat laut dan indahnya ombak, gemulainya pohon kelapa
Para gadis yang mulai menari, kibarkan merah putih
Untuk Indonesia, kita punya semua, seribu budaya dan kekayaan alam yang tak kan terkalahkan
Untuk Indonesia, jadilah legenda, kita bisa dan percaya
Darah Indonesia, akulah halilintar mu
Darah Indonesia, menggelegar tuk selamanya
Darah Indonesia, walau badai menghadang kau tak kan pernah hilang
Walau badai menghadang

²⁵ “Red and white” refers to the Indonesian flag.

the end of 2014, the band could demand performance fees nearly as high as the country's longest-standing bands, including Iwan Fals or Slank. Furthermore, arguably no other band has as successfully cultivated a performance identity that is imitated by hundreds of thousands, even millions of fans throughout the country as this punk rock trio from "Kuta Rock City."

SID's successes may overshadow somewhat the band's own ruminations on local pride, heritage, and perseverance. The song, "Jadilah Legenda" provides a case in point: Early in their careers, Superman Is Dead often commented that their primary goal was to become rock legends (See Baulch 2007). Fame, they claimed, was a motivating factor for their deep commitment to playing together since they formed their act in Jerinx's home studio in Kuta back in 1995. The professional successes of Bali's indie bands should not be taken to be a result of opportunities provided by others alone—by venue owners, sponsors, or media. Rather, these artists have taken a stance on their power as performers that enables them to identify such opportunities and their right to seize them. Berger argues that "charisma or stage presence, a confident or authoritative stance on one's own behavior as a performer and on one's relationship to one's audience" (2009, 119), is an example of a stance on power. The audacity to claim that one has the right to national and international fame is an extension of this stance on power.

But as the next chapter will demonstrate, SID uses their stance on power to transform the stage into a platform to demand social, political, and environmental justice for Balinese, as well as to celebrate Indonesia's crowning creative achievements on a global scale. "Jadilah Legenda" is not about celebrity. It is about heroism. SID is calling on the listener to play an active roll in honoring the extraordinariness and majesty of the

nation. While the song echoes a post-Suharto, romantic nationalism, it should not be dismissed as an attempt to lure a fanbase with feigned patriotism. Read within the context of SID's activist work off the stage to cultivate direct action for the good of Indonesia, the song—and the music video that accompanies it—suggests that the nation's heroes are not politicians in Jakarta, but the youth who can reshape it.

In 2011, as The Hydrant reminisced about their tour to Europe, vocalist Marsello commented, “This tour wasn’t about *our* band. This was about Bali. And we weren’t playing for Indonesia. We were playing for the world” (interview, 2013). Thus, while one may be tempted to read into The Hydrant’s choice of donning “traditional” Balinese regalia for a concert in a foreign country as self-exoticization to pander to a European audience, in fact, the band’s motivations were very different: They were there to represent Bali. That same year, SID posted a Facebook Note titled “SID vs. Dunia” (SID vs. the World), written shortly after they made it to the Billboard Charts: “It should be noted that on Billboard’s ‘Uncharted,’ SID competed with bands/musicians from around the world. This was a real global competition. SID’s ranking on this list automatically confirmed that Indonesia has the potential [to make] modern art. That Indonesian worth is accounted for. The recognition that Indonesia *can*” (my emphasis).²⁶

Going global is not only a matter of professional success but also a matter of pride in local art. According to Luvaas, such artists “have, in fact, become something of informal ambassadors for an Indonesian “buy local” movement...incit[ing] youth from all over the archipelago to ‘support the local brand revolution!’” (2009, 274). While

²⁶ “Perlu dicatat bahwa di Billboard Uncharted, SID bersaing dengan band/musisi dari seluruh dunia. Inilah persaingan global yang sebenarnya. Masuknya SID ke dalam daftar ini otomatis menjadi sebuah pengakuan solid bahwa Indonesia memiliki potensi seni modern. Bahwa Indonesia layak diperhitungkan. Pengakuan bahwa Indonesia bisa.”

Luvaas's comments were intended to demonstrate independent musicians' national influence, SID's Facebook Note suggests a reframing of this notion for an imagined global audience. In certain (but not all) domains of practice within the indie scene, the local and global—the national and international—are important, idealized social spaces to which independent music producers stake a claim.

No artist who participated in this research would willingly interpret “becoming a legend”—of achieving national and international acclaim—as the terminal goal of music professionalism. All were invested in something greater than their own success. The next chapter will explore what exactly preoccupied them beyond celebrity, commercial success, and financial stability. For in the end, if their home—including its natural environment, political system, social ethics, belief systems, and ethnic diversity—is under threat, then music must become a vehicle to vehemently protect it. Chapter 5 will examine how individuals within the scene took a stance on collective wellbeing that shaped how their social history is interpreted and Bali's future and wellbeing were imagined.

Becoming a legend requires a brazen, entrepreneurial spirit (Shipley 2013), but it also requires strength in adversity, self-belief (*percaya diri*), and collective work. The “you” in SID's song is not a single hero but a collective—the “people,” in Indonesian. It is the collective that ultimately decides the future of a music scene, island home, or nation. At the end of the 2014, at the dawn of a new presidency, Bali faces greater pressure from unchecked tourism development than it ever has before. The very shape of the island is poised to be reformed, if politicians do not bend to the collective will. Musicians are at the forefront of the music activism that, ultimately, binds individuals

together to a degree unmatched by casual socializing, the mutual tuning in of performance, or even the collective pride of professional accolades. While one may view SID's song and as blind optimism, in the end, all that is required to shape future actions is belief that one can. And then one does.

Chapter 5: “Do it Yourself is Dead, Now We Do it Together”¹: The Ties that Bind (or Unwind)

In early 2009, I met Rudolf Dethu and Igo Blado for the first time at a *warung ikan bakar* (grilled fish eatery) next door to Suicide Glam, Dethu’s fashion and music distro and tattoo parlor, and Forrest Club, the open-air café erected adjacent to the distro and run by Dethu’s sister. Emma Baulch, a cultural studies scholar who wrote about Bali’s punk, metal, and reggae scenes in the 1990s (2007), put me in touch with Dethu, whom I contacted and asked for an interview to discuss Bali’s rock and pop Bali bands. Dethu had already scheduled a meeting with Igo a bit earlier in the day, and to my good fortune, invited him to attend our interview as well. A few days later, at Warung Teguh, a favorite garden café only a few minutes motorbike ride from Renon, I met Robi Navicula, following our initial introductions through Navicula’s manager at a local band competition. We discussed his band and the state of the local music scene.

During these early research conversations, I did not know enough about Navicula or Dethu or Igo’s various contributions to local music-making to recognize a cohesive music scene. Following the lead of Baulch’s work, I assumed that bands continued to be segregated by genre loyalty, and I did not suspect that the island now supported a burgeoning recording industry. Furthermore, I had no understanding of Dethu and Igo’s relationships to Robi, or how I would be woven into the fabric of Bali’s indie music scene by meeting these influential scene leaders early in the research. Within days of these initial interviews, the network of individuals—and the webs of significance they weave to bind together their domains of music practice—would begin to materialize.

¹ Song by Navicula, *Love Bomb* (2013).

The next day, I accepted Igo's invitation to join his reggae-rock band, Ed Eddy & Residivis (RSDVS), on a road trip to Negara, West Bali. Within our entourage of more than twenty musicians, crew, and friends I met Dadang, Navicula's guitarist and Dialog Dini Hari's frontman, who was filling in for RSDVS's lead guitarist, Chalie. During the show, where bands RSDVS, Superman Is Dead, and Geekssmile, as well as local bands and an out-of-town act from Jakarta performed for a packed stadium of Negara teenagers at the city's GOR (Gedung Olah Raga), Igo invited me backstage and introduced me to the trio behind Superman Is Dead, Jerinx, Bobi, and Eka. Earlier in the evening, over dinner and beers, Dadang invited me to join his band for their tour to Jakarta, where they would perform at coffee houses, restaurants, and bars; attend live radio and magazine interviews; and lay down tracks at a Tebet recording studio for their next album. A few weeks later, during that Jakarta tour, I spent many hours hanging out at the studio, gig venues, and radio stations with Dadang, bassist Zio, and drummer Deny, all veterans of well-known Bali bands. Zio formerly played bass with rockabilly act The Hydrant, and Deny was drummer for rock Bali band Lolot. Back in southern Bali, I attended a gig at Twice Bar for the first time, where I met Nymphaea and had my first conversation with vocalist Sari.

These early introductions, combined with a fervency to attend all local performances, enabled me to meet most of the people playing an active role in Bali's indie music scene in a matter of weeks. It would take several more months to meet the individuals "behind the scenes," like Anom Darsana, founder of Antida Productions and concert producer; Bagus Mantra, the first Balinese businessman to invest substantial capital into the local recording industry by opening Pregina Records; or Erick Est, the

gifted filmmaker behind many of the music video clips shot between 2009 and 2014. The ease with which one introduction led to another, however, allowed me to map out scene relationships based on creative partnerships, and led me to formulate the primary contention of this study: that music-related practices can serve to bind together otherwise disparate individuals and strengthen a sense of sharedness that studies on culture normally reserve for overarching structures of subjectivity like class, language, ancestry, or religion. Initial research questions were directed toward understanding how these individuals came to be connected to one another and what drew them into professional relationships and personal friendships. I was also interested in understanding the idiosyncrasies of this particular scene—not only in terms of the “texts” (Berger 2009) produced—the songs sung—but also in the individuals, their histories, and their actions—the singers singing—that make this, like any scene anywhere, unique and worthy of study (ibid.).

This chapter will build upon the first four to further identify the common threads connecting individuals and engendering group cohesion. It will return to genre to examine collective aesthetic commitment, performance to establish “mutual tuning in,” and *nongkrong* (hanging out) as a commitment to engage within the spaces territorialized (Baulch 2007) by scene participants. It will examine how a broader social ethos of collectivism acts in contradistinction to the individualism fetishized in popular music and how music activism directs collective action toward a greater good. Failing to address the challenges to group cohesion would, of course, exaggerate the capability of music-making to bind together individuals in perpetuity. Therefore the chapter will also examine problems that tease apart the threads: Family obligations, financial hardship, a

loss of space to gather, and internal prejudices and elitism all threaten to unravel a scene that, just like any other sphere of elected belonging, is as ephemeral as the attention scene participants direct toward its endurance. Despite such challenges, for a brief period in Bali's history, the indie scene was "home" for a small number of individuals who chose to make it happen through the music they made. In fact, I would argue that many shared a reflexively developed belief about the importance of their roles as music producers and professionals to cultivate community through music-making.

Performance, Genre, and Belonging

For performers and concertgoers alike, a live music performance can be an intensely exciting experience that strengthens a sense of sharedness through collective pleasure. Of course, every performance is a unique unfolding of moments in time, shared by a group of people who bring their individual attitudes and degrees of engagement into the performance experience. As authors such as Fonarow (2006) and Berger illustrate (2009), a concert is not a uniform experience: some audiences engage in spirited dance, sing along with the band's lyrics, and cheer during songs, while others may be found chatting and drinking at the fringes of the performance space, paying less attention to what is happening on the stage. Interaction between the performers, too, can intensify or reduce feelings of camaraderie, depending upon any number of factors, from players' moods to alcohol consumption to malfunctioning equipment. A lack of attention to the actions of others impacted whether or not a "mutual tuning-in," the "the reciprocal sharing of the Other's flux of experiences in inner time, by living through a vivid present

together” (Schutz 1964 [1951], 177) can take place. While each performance experience is unique, scene participants often idealized performance as an important example of a community-building practice. After all, it requires teamwork involving many individuals beyond the musicians on the stage. From the spouses, siblings, and friends of bands who fill out the audience and run merchandise tables to sound engineers, lighting and stage technicians, food and beverage vendors, and security: everyone involved in the staging of a live performance plays a crucial role in creating—or dismantling—a building-up to that magical transition to the “inner time” of “mutually tuning-in” (Schutz, *ibid.*).² I was often only partially engaged in observing the stage and music performance and distracted by conversations with scene participants. On occasion I was actively engaged in enjoying music performance and paid greater attention to the performance act. I interacting with others through clapping, laughter, group singing, and dance, rather than words, and I moved to the primary audience space. My positioning varied from the center of the mosh pit in front of the performance space (where one existed), to the fringes, when men’s exuberant moshing became too frenetic to be safe, to immediately in front of—and even pressed up against the edge of—in close observation, where I sang alongside other loyal fans bands’ lyrics.

The context for performance also impacts its bond-building potential: In my observations, events organized by indie scene leaders tended to cultivate a deeper sense of sharedness than regular, weekly gigs for tourists and expats or other commercial gigs. These events brought together more individuals who already knew each other and worked together, and they often celebrated a crowning achievement within the indie scene, thus

² Turino, building on Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of *optimal experience* or *flow*, describes this experience as “a state of heightened concentration, when one is so intent on the activity at hand that all other thoughts, concerns, and distractions disappear and the actor is fully in the present” (2008, 4).

creating a sense of collective accomplishment. Album launches, for example, provided an opportunity not only for bands to exhibit (and sell copies) of their latest albums for fans; they also affirmed friendships between bands: At every album launch I attended, other musicians showed up as well, not to perform, but to support the feature band as audience members. For example in 2012, when Dialog Dini Hari launched their album *Lirih Penyair Murung* (Quietly, the Moody Poet), the audience included musicians Prima Geekssmile, Made Bayak, Jerinx SID, and many others who came to enjoy the intimate event and as a show of their support for the band. Of course, the setting also impacts the degree of intimacy that may be achieved between bands and audiences: Geekssmile's album launch for their 2010 launch of *Upeti untuk Macan Indonesia* (Tribute to the Indonesian Tiger) was held at the massive Boshe nightclub in Kuta, where a catwalk and DJ booth separate the audience by several meters from the band. The *Lirih Penyair Murung* launch, on the other hand, held in the outdoor setting of Art Café, a garden café owned by DDH bassist Zio Orah and his wife, allowed for closer physical distance between artists and audiences. The garden setting also cultivated intimate dialogues: throughout the evening, during performances and in between sets, concertgoers were found seated on the ground throughout the garden, engaged in intimate conversation. An atmosphere of intimacy—as well as exclusivity: the majority of the audience members knew one another and were active in the social circles through which the indie scene developed—that was not achieved at Boshe.

Small-scale events were not the only type to cultivate intimacy among scene participants, however: The collective effort to stage a large-scale performance, welcoming many more artists to perform and audiences of as many as 5,000, also helped

to strengthen relationships in the scene: The Bali Jam Fest, held in 2007 and 2008 at GOR (Gedung Olah Raga, Sports Building) Denpasar, provides a case in point: I attended the second festival in 2008. The brainchild of Pregina owner Bagus Mantra, Bali Jam Fest took place over two days across two stages and featured pop, pop Bali, folk, and jazz artists on Day One, and a wide range of punk, metal, and rock acts on Day Two. While the festival attracted a relatively small audience of less than 10,000 people across the two days (Mantra blamed the rainy weather; interview, 2011), the event welcomed almost every recording artist at that time, including bands Navicula, Superman Is Dead, Nymphaea, Discotion Pill, Geekssmile, and Dialog Dini Hari. Thus, while the poor attendance and resultant revenue loss may lead one to call the festival a failure, the collective effort of putting on an event of this size required a collective responsibility and initiative. It also provided an opportunity for several bands and their entourages to interact socially backstage and served to further confirm which acts were the most popular that time and who were the true scene leaders—aka, headliners.

While the degree of attention audiences give to performers will vary, in general—and ideally—bands were the event’s focal point for a live concert or music festival. In these important setting, with the attention of tens or thousands directed at them, artists showcased their musical facility and built their reputations as performers. Senior music writers like Dethu and Putranto often described facility in terms of the quality of the songwriting, facility playing an instrument or singing, and overall band image or “attitude” (Dethu, interview, 2010), including on-stage persona, based on movement and speech onstage. Yet generally speaking, musical facility was not the most important factor determining which bands were most influential within the scene. In fact, very few

conversations revolved around the musical facility of artists, and when this topic was broached, language about facility was often nonspecific: Adjectives as vague as “good” (*bagus; mantap*) or “bad” (*buruk*) were mostly commonly assigned in such cases. Musicians who were “tuned in” to the tonality during performances occasionally described vocalists as singing “sharp” (*terlalu tinggi*) or “flat” (*kurang tinggi; rendah*) or drummer as “not tight” (*kurang kencang*). More common than specific comments about musical facility, however, were comments to describe what admirable talents artists displayed that became associated with their performance identities. Sari Nymphaea; Qupit, Angga, and Cok, the three vocalists from the folk band Nosstress, as well as Ian Stevenson, formerly of Kaimsasikun and Dialog Dini Hari, were all praised by music critics, studio engineers, and other musicians for their strong voices. Dadang, both as Dialog Dini Hari’s frontman and Navicula’s lead guitarist; Leo Suicidal Sinatra; and solo blues musician Made Mawut shared reputations for being among the island’s best rock guitarists, though their playing styles and preferred instruments varied significantly.³ Nurdi Geekssmile, Gembull Navicula, and Deny Dialog Dini Hari were among the island’s most respected kit drummers. Finally, Robi Navicula and Jerinx SID were often cited as the strongest frontmen, well respected because of their proficiency as band leaders and charisma on stage.

While I would not go so far as to call the indie music scene a stance-prominent culture (Berger 2009), in the sense that particular musical styles were a primary preoccupation scene participants shared, genre is one aspect of music-making that

³ The guitarist often cited as the most technically proficient in Bali is Balawan (See Harnish 2013), an artist who, due to his generic proclivities for jazz and ethnic fusion music, tends to be peripheral to the indie scene. His development of a touch-tapping technique using two guitar fingerboards, however, has earned him collegial respect among indie artists, particularly among the rock guitarists mentioned here.

impacts scene relationships: With a few exceptions, most bands within the indie scene adhered to a basic instrumentation of electric guitar, drum kit, and electric bass that is across all subgenres of rock, metal, and punk. These styles of music were often coalesced under the designation “rock music” or “*musik keras*” (hard music). Furthermore, many research participants commented that Balinese musicians tend to have a predilection for rock music, in comparison to other regions of Indonesia: Dethu, went so far as to claim that pop bands were in the minority in Bali, while *musik keras* was the norm (interview, 2010). Furthermore, since the most well known bands to emerge from Bali up to 2014 all performed *musik keras*, Dethu added, “It is no wonder that eventually people associate Bali with rock.”⁴ Nova Scared of Bums concurred with Dethu, arguing that rock music was a primary feature in Bali’s soundscape that he truly enjoys and that can cultivate an excited audience response. He commented, “I really respect this community because I think rock in Bali is really, truly idolized...Indeed, it’s clear that rock music is really appealing to the Balinese ear because for most of the events in Bali, the concept is almost always to invite a band from a hard genre, that really has the spirit of rock. And the audience that comes will definitely be lively. That is really a source of pride for me, that rock is in Bali’s soul and that we are surrounded by a scene that supports us” (Nova, interview, 2011).⁵

While Brent Luvaas’s portrayal of acts like SID and The Hydrant dismisses their generic loyalties as a “cabaret” of the western acts they seek to emulate—Luvaas writes,

⁴ “Jadi tidak aneh kalau akhirnya orang memperhitungkan Bali. Dan identik dengan rock.”

⁵ “Saya sangat *respect* banget sama komunitas karena di Bali saya rasa rock itu emang benar-benar banyak yang menggemari. Memang kuping orang Bali itu emang cocoknya musik rock karena sebagian besar acara di Bali itu kan, apa namanya, konsepnya tuh pasti nawarin band yang beraliran keras gitu, rock. Dan orang yang datang pasti ramai. Itu kebanggaan saya kepada ini Bali sih emang benar-benar gimana ya, apa namanya, rock emang jiwanya...[dan] dengan dikelilingi oleh *scene* yang memang mendukung kita.”

“Bands tended to wear their influences on their sleeves, to dress in imitation of their idols, and to carefully study and mimic their antics on stage as accurately as they could” (2013, Loc. 3182)—I see artists’ loyalties to rock—and the artists most widely credited with shaping the music they liked—as an important part of their subjectivities within the scene. The motivations for their generic loyalty varied widely and changed with time: SID began their careers by emulating Green Day in order to cultivate a fanbase of young boys who already idolized the California pop punk band. The Hydrant, on the other hand, grew out of Marsello’s talent for imitating Elvis Presley and bassist Adi’s adeptness at playing upright bass. Identifying specifically with these international acts helped artists to situate themselves in a global music history. Still other artists, like Dialog Dini Hari, Nosstress, or Discotion Pill, take the indie scene’s generic trajectories into uncharted territory. While a fusion of rock and electronica was increasingly common elsewhere in the world, it was entirely new to Bali. Very few young musicians knew about bands like Panic at the Disco when Dizta and his bandmates first introduced this concept in performance. Dizta had very few musical peers in the late 2000s. He explained, “After I heard Panic at the Disco, I thought, ok, this is a great band. Then I thought, there isn’t anything else like this in Bali. Rock mixed with electronic music. And then after a few more months, I made our first demos, you know, like a raw demo. Our first demo happened like that (interview, 2009).⁶” Despite the newness of their genre and their difficulties in cultivating a fanbase in Bali, Discotion Pill was able to play a central role in the local music scene during their most active years performing because they earned

⁶ “Setelah *listen to* Panic at the Disco, saya pikir, *oh it’s a great band. I think*, belum ada di Bali kayak itu sebelumnya. Rock, campur elektronik. *And then, after* berapa bulan kemudian, saya buat-buat demo, ada pertama *you know the raw demo? The first demo like that.*”

respect by scene leaders like Dethu, Robi, and Jerinx, all of whom commented on the band's musical proficiency within their genre of choice.

While an overall preference for rock music has not excluded explorations in folk or electronic music, “pop music” was almost entirely denigrated by research participants. The term “pop” was used interchangeably with “mainstream” or “commercial” music and was clearly identified as the antithesis of indie. Yet what, exactly, makes pop aesthetically different was never outlined to any degree of specificity. The *Oxford* attempt at a global definition, borrowing from Simon Frith, concludes, “...pop is defined as much by what it isn't as by what it is (Frith 2001).’ While a genre like Rock has identifiable sonic markers and characteristics—such as an emphasis on electric guitar, extensive use of blues-influenced structures, an ideology of authenticity and sincerity—pop as a genre cannot be said to have a coherent style” (Warwick, *Grove Music Online*). Generally, underlying valuations, rather than reflective theorizing tended to define pop against indie music: Dethu, Robi, and Nova Scared of Bums each mentioned that pop features more “slow music” (*lagu slow*) or ballads than the hard and fast tempos of rock. Sari suggested that pop tends to attract a female audience, whereas rock music attracts an almost exclusively male audience.⁷ In our conversation during studio mixing sessions, Dadang illustrated the different mixing customs distinguishing pop from rock; he explained that in addition to featuring more synthesized sounds, pop tends to exhibit heavy-handed post-production to mask the natural discrepancies present when people sing or play instruments live: sounds like fingers sliding on guitar strings during chord changes or a vocalist's imperfect pitch may be corrected in pop post-production. Pop

⁷ Warwick also argues that pop tends to be associated with female audiences (*Grove*, Accessed 22 November 2014).

mixing, Dadang argued, also places greater emphasis on lead vocals, rather than prioritizing an even amplification across vocals and instruments (interview, 2009). Finally, several individuals bemoaned pop's vapid lyrics, which leaned toward shallow introspection or overemphasized romantic love. Aldo Sianturi, who has worked with many pop artists as former Marketing Director for Universal Music Indonesia, also argued that pop in Indonesia tends to prioritize celebrity over improved musicianship (interview, 2010).

Another commonly disparaged genre was *dangdut*, a style of music that first emerged in Jakarta and remains popular throughout many of the country's urban centers. *Dangdut* was initially influenced by both *orkestra Melayu* and Indian film music. The name is an onomatopoeic derivation of the drum sounds and pattern characteristic of the genre. It often features vocal embellishments common to Muslim recitation and West Asian song styles, applied to frequently flirtatious or even sexually explicit lyrics—though a number of subgenres of *dangdut* distinguish this latter *dangdut nakal* (naughty *dangdut*) from other, less explicit songs that explore a variety of themes⁸. Predominantly male audiences often perform a signature dance move involving exaggerated, shrugging shoulder movements with fists raised and thumbs out—a dance style also suggestive of the Indian musicals frequently broadcast on national television stations (McIntosh 2010). In the 1970s and 80s, *dangdut* artist Rhoma Irama, who became the genre's biggest star, began incorporating rock music instrumentation (Lockard 1998) but also touted a conservative Islam to which many individuals I knew in the indie scene were opposed.

⁸ See Weintraub 2010 for a more extensive description of *dangdut* and its intersections with politics, class, and gender relations, as well as ethnical norms and social expectations in Indonesia.

By the end of 2014, *dangdut* was still sonically palpable in Bali as well. It could be heard at cassette and VCD stalls in Denpasar and Sanur's night markets, on radio and television broadcasts, and at *kafe* (cafes), bars notorious for thinly veiling their prostitution businesses, where men could pay to drink with young women working as escorts. According to indie scene participants, as well as other Balinese with whom I engaged in casual conversation, *dangdut*'s primary fanbase was the labor force of itinerant workers from other parts of Indonesia. Yet as McIntosh notes, local pop Bali artists, as well as young teenagers performing dance routines in schools and at *banjar* youth events, also frequently emulated the music and hypersexual dance styles of *dangdut*'s leading female performers (McIntosh 2010).

Like pop, almost everyone with whom I spoke rejected *dangdut*, and often unprovoked by my research questions. *Dangdut* was often the butt of jokes about the worst of Indonesian popular music. I found this an unusual blind spot within the typically more even-handed evaluations of Indonesian popular genres, particularly since other studies (Wallach 2008, Weintraub 2010) touted *dangdut* as, historically, *the* "music of disenfranchised urban youth" (Weintraub 2010, Loc. 82) and a music that symbolized Indonesia's "underclass" (ibid., Loc. 100). This suggested to me that indie artists did not approve of the genre. Even the most open-minded music explorers like Marmar, who previously in the same interview claimed to like everything from R&B to *beleganjur*, made it clear that he had no interest in this ubiquitous Indonesian genre. My suspicion was that the genre's ubiquity was partially responsible for artists' distaste, but I was also concerned that my interlocutors were dismissing the genre because of its association with Java or, worse, the urban poor. Finally in October 2014 I laid all assumptions to rest and

asked directly, via a Facebook message tagging each research participant who had previously maligned *dangdut*, what was so bad about it. What I discovered, firstly, was that research participants took a different attitude in the semi-public forum of social media. Responses were much more nuanced and no one wholly rejected the genre, as they had in other contexts. Secondly, several respondents actually did appreciate the music as a distinctively Indonesian genre that does require technical proficiency to perform. Ian Stevenson, for example, replied, “Dangdut is actually a difficult form of music to produce. It seems that only people who can play original *dangdut* know how to make new *dangdut* music.”⁹ Two mentioned its great beat and danceability: Prima replied, “...it’s definitely a good danceable music with all those grooves,” and Zio Dialog Dini Hari wrote, “The beat makes you feel good and happy...” Thirdly, two respondents rejected Rhoma Irama, but not the genre: Ian wrote, “Nothing wrong with dangdut. Great singing, groovy beats, and sexy dancing. Just cant stand Rhoma Irama,” while Zio added, “just can’t stand the King,” referring to Rhoma Irama. Robi, however, came to “The King’s” defense by citing his central role in popularizing the genre and tremendous popularity as a solo performer as grounds for a modicum of respect. He wrote, “Without Rhoma, *dangdut* wouldn’t be booming...I still remember the time when I lived in Palu in the 1980s: because of Rhoma Irama’s gig, the town’s lights went out. They say because all of the electricity was used for his mega-concert...After the concert, all you heard on public transportation for months was that song, ‘Gambling’ for months. Everyone’s

⁹ “Dangdut is actually a difficult form of music to produce. Kayanya hanya orang yang biasa mainkan musik dangdut asli yang tau caranya bikin musik dangdut.”

excited, all because of those sideburns and Rhoma's hajj! That fever spread as far as Central Sulawesi, so no wonder it was big in Java."¹⁰

Comments by Robi, Prima, Ian, Zio, and others in response to my query helped to muddy the waters on *dangdut* derision. By asking that they tell me more about their previous comments on *dangdut*, it became clear that it was not unanimously denigrated, and that reasons for liking or disliking the genre varied. By distancing their own musical styles from pop and *dangdut*, however, such artists found common threads that hold their scene together and apart from others. As Dethu's response indicated, à la Bourdieu ([1979] 1984), economic class continued to impact musical taste in the city, and as Negus and Velázquez argue, music may be "associated with ambivalence and detachment rather than belonging" (2002, 135).

With the exception of Dethu, who tended to emphasize Balinese urban youth's emulation of "western" culture at the expense of Indonesian expressive culture, comments about *dangdut* did not indicate that artists rejected the music because it was local. The same can be said for many artist's tendencies toward rock music, rather than, say *pop Bali* or even gamelan. Baulch's contention that genres of rock music were a rejection of indigenous cultural forms does not reveal the entire picture. Baulch writes that in such cases, "'localness' may be revived when people reject autochthonous modes of communality. Such rejections produce cultural schisms and allow alternative solidarities to develop" (2007, 177). At one level, this is true. Interviews with Dethu, Igo, and Marmar each suggested that their early attraction to rock music was due to their

¹⁰ "Tanpa Rhoma, dangdut gak bakal booming. Aku masih ingat waktu tinggal di Palu tahun 80-an, gara-gara Rhoma Irama manggung, satu kota mati listrik. Desas-desus konon karena listriknya abis dipake di mega konser nya doi...Pasca konser, semua angkot demam setel lagu "Judi" selama berbulan-bulan. Heboh, gara-gara cambangnya Haji Rhoma! Itu aja demamnya nun jauh di Sulawesi Tengah yak, apalagi di Jawa."

excitement about encountering something new and different from the musics they grew up hearing in traditional ritual settings. One could interpret this as a rejection of the parent culture and embracing of the foreign. Robi and Sari had very different experiences with rock, however: Robi's father was a God Bless fan and Sari's led his own rock band. Their parents were the first people to introduce them to rock music. They did not reject rock music as the style associated with their parents, however. Furthermore, as Chapter 2 explored, while fusions of traditional and popular music happen only in the margins, they do happen: Bali's most well-known artists, from SID and Navicula to younger acts like Nosstress have experimented with the sounds of traditional Bali.

Another case in point is the documentary film *Janggan*, directed and produced by Erick Est, the island's most popular young filmmaker. Erick recruited a number of rock bands to work with him on the soundtrack for the film project about Bali's traditional kite festival. Contributing groups included Ganjil, Scared of Bums, and The Djihad. The bands each performed well-known folk songs about the kite festival, but arranged to suit their rock proclivities. According to Erick, incorporating rock music into a film about an autochthonous Balinese sporting tradition was not at all problematic: both kiting and rock music are vibrant traditions in modern Bali and incredibly popular among Balinese youth (interview, 13 October 2014).

Forrest Club

Coffee and Wi-Fi were my prerequisites, and Forrest Club had both. But then I was on the outside and could not see the forest for its fruit. At least not in the beginning. As months passed, more and more frequently my attention was

pulled outward, away from the computer screen—the transcribing, photo editing, note-taking, conference applications—and toward my surroundings. I would spend hours in the afternoon hanging out with Dadang, smoking kretek, drinking strong coffee, and admiring his idle guitar playing. Occasionally he would borrow my hand-held audio recorder to quick-record new song ideas or guitar licks. I passed many nights at Forrest Club as well, observing artists reveling in the freedom of informal music-making. Friends and fans would gather around, close to the guitar, the only audiences to impress. Some would take up their own instruments or join in with singing.

On one particular night, friends Miki and Unti brought their six-year-old son, Karim. Karim had memorized all of the songs from Dialog Dini Hari's debut album. That night, in a confident voice, he obliged our song requests and sang, one song after the other, together with Dadang, while his father joined in on an old Russian accordion. I recorded the singalong with my handheld recorder.

Later that night, as I played back the moments, I grew annoyed to hear my own voice contributing. Why had I intruded, I thought? And then, alone in my room, the essence of Forrest Club emerged in my thoughts: At such moments, Forrest Club was not a restaurant or performance venue. Dadang and Karim were not bandmates on a stage. The café terrace was their front stoop or bale. The friends gathered round, all family. Forrest Club, though situated on a bustling Denpasar street and wide open for the world to see, was theirs. And I was no longer apart.

Just as essential as finding common ground in creative expression was having places to meet. Baulch's work explores the territorialization of spaces in urban Bali by punk and metal artists and fans (2007). Ten years later, having places to hang was still important to scene participants. When I arrived in 2008, Forrest Club was the only popular space for intimate, insider performances and scene hanging out. The venue was only open for a little over a year, but during that time, it hosted some of the most memorable indie music events and was a favorite among individuals like Dethu, Dadang, Robi, and Igo for casual socializing, band meetings, workshops, and small-scale performances. The small café, featuring a small kitchen for snacks, coffee, or beers and a few tables and chairs positioned on a terrace, was attached in an L-fashion to distro and clothing line Suicide Glam, owned by Rudolf Dethu. Several active and former musicians worked there: Roy Bagwel from punk band The Djihad was a tattoo artist in the Suicide Glam studio, and blues guitarist Made Mawut worked behind the bar in the café. Dethu's sister, PW ran the venue. The level to which a space became important for scene socializing depended on many dynamics: A space owned by an active contributor to the scene like Twice Bar or Forrest Club was more likely to attract casual socializing, both during and outside of the main activities of the music business.

Having a place to gather opened opportunities for individuals who may not otherwise have ever met to come together. While attending an artist talk at Forrest Club, Monez met Dethu for the first time, and was subsequently introduced to Robi. Without that opportunity to interact socially with Navicula's former manager, Monez may not have begun collaborating with the band in what has become a many-year professional relationship. In 2009, Monez designed the band's tour poster celebrating the launch of

their album, *Salto*.¹¹ Robi and Monez worked together to transform the yellow and black caterpillar that dominates the cover of the album *Salto* into a gigantic, octopus-like sea monster preparing to devour a human victim just off the shores of Bali.

When Suicide Glam changed locations, Forrest Club's popularity waned, and by early 2010 it was demolished. For months, no space was as central to the indie scene as it had been. In late November 2010, however, Anom Darsana opened Serambi Arts Antida, a new open-air café featuring an expansive garden big enough to accommodate a sizeable stage and audience and a covered pavilion for more intimate gigs and continued socializing during the rainy season. The location, adjacent to Anom's recording studio, was ideal for the indie scene: Artists were already spending hours and days there, hard at work on their albums, and having a place to hang out meant that their entourage of friends and families could enjoy the setting as well. Unfortunately, Serambi Arts Antida was closed following a land dispute with Anom's then business partner, a British expatriate who sold the land to the highest bidder.

Beginning in 2012, a former iconic venue in the local music scene was resurrected in Warung Tresni in Renon, a grilled chicken restaurant by day, began featuring live music and cultural events for the first time in nearly two decades. During the 1970s it was the first venue to feature live rock music performance: A Rolling Stones cover band, Bali Blues, performed there regularly and even attracted a sizeable clientele of tourists who would venture into the city to hear them play.

In addition to physical spaces for socializing, indie scene participants cultivated intimacy online as well. The number of young people communicating through online

¹¹ See Monez's poster in "Albums and Gigs" in the research blog (<http://baliunderground.com/albums-and-gigs/>).

social media in Indonesia (and the amount of time invested daily for such activity) is astonishing. Indonesians now constitute the second largest population group on Facebook, after the United States (Lutfia, January 13, 2010). Now that some mobile phone devices feature applications for direct access to Facebook and Twitter, Indonesians throughout the archipelago embrace online social networking as a primary means to interact. Indie scene participants would adapt *nongkrong*, that all-important ethic of sociality, to modern communications technology. Thus, despite predictions that the Internet would detrimentally impact socializing practices (See Jones 2000), online interactions were, in fact, critical for strengthening social alliances. They did not replace face-to-face encounters, however: fans and bands continued to value live performance, media interviews preferably occurred in person, and friendships and professional relationships were reinforced by in-person *nongkrong*. Rather, Internet interactions filled in the gaps where geographical distance, the lack of a good venue, or time limitations prevented more frequent face-to-face interactivity, and these two modes of sociality maintain a “recursive relationship” (Wilson and Peterson 2002, 454).

“Do It Yourself is Dead, Now We Do It Together” – by Navicula¹²

*Once one by one One-on-one pass
We challenged one another
I sang alone
Danced in isolation
Apparently I was not alone
Much is like this
When I love
All I know is only to give*

I, you, we can...we can together.

*If you really love
Divide the world
Talk of dignity
See what you have given
Be thankful and enjoy
Your prayer today
Be sure you are not alone
We welcome the sun*

I, you, we can...we can together

United we stand

¹² Satu-satu berlalu
Bersama kita berpacu
Ku menyanyi sendiri
Menari dalam sepi
Ternyata ku tak sendiri
Banyak yang seperti ini
Saat ku mencintai
Yang ku tau hanya memberi
Aku, kamu, kita...bisa...bisa...bersama.
Bila kau benar cinta
Bagilah pada dunia
Bicara harga diri
Lihat yang telah kau beri
Syukuri dan nikmati
Doamu hari ini
Yakin kau tak sendiri
Kita sambut matahari
Aku, kamu, kita...bisa...bisa...bersama
Bersatu kita teguh
Bertikai kita leraai
Bersama
Bukan untukku
Tapi untuk kita
Bersama...bersama...bersama

*Conflicted we pass judgment
Together
Not for me
But for us
Together...together...together*

Chapter 4 explored how individual band successes led to the professionalization of the indie scene—an important component for its longevity. This chapter takes a closer look at what other factors may help to explain individual's commitment to a largely untenable form of music-making. To a degree, SID, Navicula, and Dialog Dini Hari present an unrealistic model for professional possibility. By 2014, it was still incredibly difficult to achieve even national recognition as a band, much less earn the chance to tour outside of Indonesia. Still, the scene persevered. I would argue that this is not only due to the successes of a few niche bands at the top of the food chain, but also a shared commitment to making music for reasons beyond its vocational potential. So while scene leaders like Jerinx, Robi, Dadang, or Dethu played essential roles in helping other Balinese musicians to imagine the possibility of national and international success, their more crucial role for the local music industry was to simply continue to show up, engage, and contribute to the local scene. But why did these individuals continue to care? I believe that, in large part, it was due to an overarching, implicit value of pride in the local.

Igo and Dethu's role in band juries provides an example: According to Dethu, their involvement was a means to monitor which artists were good enough to represent Bali, and should be extended special opportunities to "go national." Dethu commented, "So we monitored which bands are good, or which bands that we thought ought to be heard outside of Bali. These are the bands that we can push so that their name becomes

known.”¹³ Their work began in the festivals, where they would handpick bands that they could groom into professional artists. Dethu might later invite such bands to play other local shows or even secure them gigs or media interviews in Jakarta, as was the case with Superman Is Dead, Navicula, and Nymphaea. While individuals Igo and Dethu often received fees from event organizers for serving on juries, their role as “artist advisors” was always uncompensated. It was a labor of love for the sustainability of the scene, as was every article that Dethu published on his blog about Balinese bands and other indie scene participants.

Musicians across cultures and genres know the intimacy that can develop by making music together. Bands often described their relationships as being as intense as family relationships or even marriages. Arix, bassist for Scared of Bums, described his relationship with bandmates using the popular Indonesian language expression, *suka duka*, which translates roughly to “joy and grief.” It is an expression that means one should weather the ups and downs of life together with others: “The four of us were already like a family [from the beginning]. For example, if one of us or one of our family members experienced ups or downs [*suka duka*], we did it together. For example, when [drummer] Nova’s grandmother died, we all went to his house. We are already whole like a family” (Arix, interview, 2010).¹⁴ Personal friendships and professional relationships were impossible to separate in the indie music scene. Almost all friendships involve some

¹³ “Jadi band-band yang kita anggap... kan kita pengen agar nama Bali terdengar luar, secara nasional gitu ya. Jadi, kita selalu memonitor band-band apa yang bagus. Band-band apa yang bisa kita dorong biar namanya terkenal gitu ya.

¹⁴ Kita saling, saling mengenal. Kita ini berempat udah kayak keluarga. Udah keluarga. Misalkan ada siapa, saudara siapa punya suka duka. Misalkan kayak Nova, neneknya meninggal, kita semua ke sana gitu. Kita udah kayak keluarga satu seutuhnya.

form of professional collaboration, and professional relationships that last rarely develop between strangers.

When musicians shared an affinity for similar styles of music—or could find common ground for an artistic collaboration, scene relations were strengthened. Indie musicians often consciously cultivated social closeness by inviting artists from other bands to make guest appearances, either during a live performance or for an album recording. For example, Sari Nymphaea has recorded with both Dialog Dini Hari and punk band Devildice, and Ian Stevenson, a founding member of Dialog Dini Hari, has on several occasions rejoined his old band in live performance to perform the song he wrote for their debut album, “Stoned Faces Don’t Lie.” Ian also frequently joined Navicula on stage to sing when the band performs a cover of Pearl Jam’s “Jeremy.”

Bali’s foremost scene leaders not only cultivated social closeness among scene participants in Bali; they also established social and creative connections with artists in Jakarta. For example Dadang invited Kikan current rock solo artist and former frontwoman for one of Indonesia’s most commercially successful rock acts of the 2000s, Cokelat, to contribute a vocal line for Dialog Dini Hari’s song “Aku Adalah Kamu” (I Am You) for their second studio album, *Lirih Penyair Murung* (Quietly, the Moody Poet, 2010). Having formed a close friendship after playing on the same lineup for several shows in Jakarta, Dadang also asked singer Kartika Jahja, frontwoman for indie act Tika and the Dissidents, to perform on Dialog Dini Hari’s recording of “Lagu Cinta” (Love Song) on their 2013 album, *Tentang Rumahku* (About My Home). Navicula has also shared the stage with Jakarta-based indie rock solo artist Oppie Andaresta. In 2013 during my appointment as Interim Director of Programming for the US Embassy’s culture center

in Jakarta, @america, I was able to extend invitations to SID to perform an acoustic show, as well as to Navicula to launch their seventh studio album, *Love Bomb*. When I curated an all-star tribute to Simon and Garfunkel to mark the anniversary of the album *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, I invited Dadang from Navicula and Dialog Dini Hari to join well-known female blues and jazz singer Bonita Adi, who is based in Jakarta.

Without a doubt, when it comes to on-stage collaborations with other bands, for bands Navicula, Dialog Dini Hari, and Superman Is Dead their most celebrated achievements have been opportunities to share a stage with the very rock legends that defined their earliest exposure to Indonesian rock. In 2010, Navicula performed together with none other than God Bless. The two bands performed God Bless's hit "Semut Hitam" (Black Ant). Three years later, Navicula recorded a cover of this song for their seventh studio album, *Love Bomb*. As outlined in Chapter 2, Robi's earliest musical influence was not a band from the west, but was, in fact, God Bless, a band to which his father introduced him. He wrote in a blog entry on Navicula's official website about the opportunity to perform with the legendary group of which he had been a fan since elementary school. When his teacher asked all of the students to perform a song in front of the class, Robi chose "Kehidupan" from God Bless's album *Semut Hitam*.

In 2013, Dadang, Navicula's guitarist and Dialog Dini Hari's frontman, performed a duet with Sawung Jabo, a rock and folk musician and founder, together with Iwan Fals, of the iconic rock band *Swami*. Sawung has since made numerous appearances at intimate gigs in Denpasar and Sanur, mostly as part of his support of the anti-reclamation campaign, Bali Tolak Reklamasi. In 2014, Superman Is Dead performed together with Iwan Fals in the Konser Suara untuk Negeri (Voice for the People Concert),

a campaign event for then presidential candidate Joko Widodo. These achievements served to expand the indie scene's network of intimacies across divisions of generation and geography. Such moments will likely serve as points of reference for future bands aiming high in their creative aspirations, as well as remain sources of pride for local Balinese artists, as brilliant examples of what Balinese artists can achieve.

During my research, I often asked artists if there is any aspect of indie music in Bali that distinguishes it from other regions in Indonesia. My intention was to unveil what artists pointed to that they believed to be special and valuable about their home music scene. Jerinx SID, for example, suggested that although, stylistically, there isn't anything completely different about Balinese bands, the "attitude," is different. Jerinx believed that Balinese are raised under an ethic of sociality that remains important to them when they begin playing music together. This, rather than distinctions in musical style, distinguishes Balinese bands, in Jerinx's opinion. He said, "What distinguishes Bali from other areas in Indonesia, is more about the attitude of the players. Maybe the music is similar with other bands, but the band personnel's attitude is different. Balinese bands tend to have a character that's similar to most Balinese: they're most friendly, warm, and they get along easily with others and easy to get close with others. And most bands from Bali are like that when they're outside of Bali" (Jerinx, interview, 2009).¹⁵ Whether or not Jerinx's generalization about Balinese bands could be said to be true (and whether or not this would also be observed in other Indonesian settings) it was his contention—and

¹⁵ Kalau di Bali yang membedakan Bali, dengan daerah-daerah lain di Indonesia, itu lebih ke *attitude* pemain bandnya mungkin, *musically* agak sama dengan band-band yang lain tapi *attitude personnel*, orang-orangnya beda. Band band Bali cenderung punya *image* yang gimana ya, tapi *maybe silent majority* karakter orang Bali sama lah seperti orang Bali kebanyakan ramah, *warm*, gitu terus apalagi, mudah bergaul, cepat akrab sama orang lain. Dan kebanyakan band-band Bali punya karakter seperti itu kalau mereka diluar Bali.

the contention of other artists—that the values of socializing, friendships, and collective wellbeing were important, and were carried over into their creative and professional activities as bands. In his study of stance, Berger distinguishes between stance-prominent cultures, which tend to prioritize performance, and text-prominent cultures, which tend to prioritize the objects produced. I would contend that there may be room in Berger’s analysis for another type of culture, and that is an intimacy-oriented cultures. While it may be said that socializing is a human universal and necessity, prioritizing socializing as a valuable component of everyday life varies across cultural contexts. Within Bali’s indie music scene, the development of intimacy was an overarching value that guided all practices. It was the value to which scene members attended more than anything else. Yet valuing intimacy suggests that there is something to be gained from living together with others. The next step is to examine the activities through which individuals have worked together to direct their collective attention toward, not only their immediate wellbeing, but also that of the greater society to which they belong.

Music Activism: History and Aims

This stage has no podium. These musicians are not politicians, news reporters, or educators. They are Indonesian citizens who share, with those in the pit tonight, a concern for justice (keadilan). This rock concert is a demonstration (demo): a loud, emotion-filled rally for honesty and equality. The dissenters do not move forward, marching in unison. They move in dance—moshing, head banging, grasping compatriots, and singing, in unison, songs that unite them and give poetic shape to a deep longing for something better, for one and all.

I found these words in my field notes in 2010, written shortly after accompanying Bali-based grunge/psychedelic rock band Navicula on a tour to Jakarta to launch their

latest single, “Metropolutan” (Metro-pollutant). One week prior, the song was released for free download on the Internet. At the time, “Metropolutan” was the band’s latest critique of environmental degradation in Indonesia, a response to the pollution crisis in the nation’s capital. Each night of the tour, hundreds of Navicula fans crammed into Jakarta venues, large and small, and many sang this song together with the band, having memorized the lyrics after just a few days of repeated listening. Something about that tour sparked my interest to explore musicians’ roles as activists and, in particular, how such activism served to deepen social attachments by directing collective attention toward common endemic goals. Of course it wasn’t *just* the tour, though the felt intensity of social critique I encountered through live performance—by joining the band and hundreds of fans, locking arms around shoulders, pumping fists in the air, and shouting, in concert, their popular songs of dissent—was indeed, moving. Rather, my many encounters with music activism in Bali and elsewhere in Indonesia inspired my own preoccupation with how individuals direct their music toward social change. In Bali, I noted numerous songs that documented and critiqued the social world in which these individuals lived. I observed *konser amal*, charity music events to raise funds for environmental catastrophes or awareness about particular social problems. I also encountered censorship—the silencing of forthright artists judged inflammatory by local authorities.¹⁶ By examining musical activism we come to understand the variant ways notions like justice, morality, and human rights are defined, as well as how they are pursued in music-making. Further, we begin to see how, similarly to Ghanaian artists within the sphere of hiplife, “reimagine themselves as socially authoritative, free-thinking public speakers (2013, Loc. 204).

¹⁶ See Sutton 2002 on performing arts censorship in Indonesia.

Furthermore, artists were not united in their opinions about how music shapes attitudes and behaviors. Prima, for example, argued that music can impact mood and even actions, to the point that if one listens to music that is depressing or encourages suicide, one may be encouraged to follow suit. He commented, “When we talk about grunge music, [for example], which has a tendency to create an atmosphere that is definitely depressing. Lots of people committed suicide. It’s already clear that the icon of grunge committed suicide.¹⁷ The icon of all suicides. It’s because of the music. It’s because of the music. Yes, you are what you eat. You are what you listen to. If you hear Slayer, you’ll become aggressive. If you hear Black Sabbath, you’ll go crazy. So yes, the genre and the theme of the song are related (Prima, interview, 2009).¹⁸ Robi took the opposite perspective, believing that music could provide a release valve so musicians and listeners alike could release pent up frustration or negative emotions and return to their daily lives, refreshed. He commented, “When you want to vent something, you’ve got the music. You can express yourself there. After that—I’m really confident about this, but, maybe I’m wrong, but this is interesting to me: A person who likes loud music—rock music, metal, etc.—he usually tends to avoid violence. He stays away from violence. So after he plays music and gets out all his anger, when he go back to society and he will be like a ‘peace’ guy, because he let out all his anger in the music” (interview, 2009).¹⁹ Neither Prima nor

¹⁷ Prima was referring to the suicide of Kurt Cobain, frontman for grunge band Nirvana.

¹⁸ “Karena kecenderungannya pada saat kita bicara tentang musik grunge, *atmosphere* yang dibentuk itu pasti *depressive*. Banyak orang yang bunuh diri. Udah jelas, ikonnya aja kan pada bunuh diri semua. Ikonnya bunuh diri semua. *It’s because the music. It’s because the music. Yes* apa yang kita makan itu kita... *You are what you eat. You are what you listen to*. Kalau kamu denger Slayer, kamu jadi agresif. Kalau kamu denger Black Sabbath, kamu jadi gila. Jadi ya sesuai tema yang ada di lagu ini dengan genre tadi itu.”

¹⁹ “Saat kamu ada masalah apa atau ingin melampiaskan sesuatu, kamu punya musik. “You can express yourself” disitu. Habis itu—saya ada sedikit kepercayaan, mungkin saya salah, tapi ini menarik bagi saya. Orang yang suka musik keras, atau musik yang rock, metal, *or something*, mereka semua biasanya cenderung jauh dari kekerasan. Jauh dari *violence*. So setelah mereka main musik dan keluar semua

Robi is absolutely correct or incorrect, because how one reacts to music will depend upon what attitude one has about how music shapes her attitudes and beliefs. It will also have to do with a host of other extra-musical factors, and one's response to the same music may change over time. However, while it would be erroneous to assume that music can shape individuals' behaviors, it is also important to point out that many people are invested in the belief that music does, in fact does exactly that. This is an important point to bear in mind the next few pages, because it helps to contextualize artists' commitment to making music that may or may not be received by their audiences in the way they intended. If artists believe the music to be influential, then that is a shared belief worth exploring on its own terms.

An overarching preoccupation shared by every individual engaged during this research project involves critiquing social injustices as well as calling for action to find a solution. While on occasion, the songs that disseminated their social messaging were called *lagu kritik sosial* (social critique songs) or, even less frequently, *lagu protes* (protest songs), I found that the songs themselves were rarely classified. I consider "protest song" an ill fit because it suggests that artists are objecting, rather than critique through songwriting and music performance and delivering a call to action that will facilitate change. Protest song also undervalues the multiple levels of these artists' involvement with social and environmental issues. When I attempted to call Navicula's environmental critiques *lagu politik* (political songs), Robi quickly corrected me, and explained that this implies songs that endorse specific political parties. More frequently, artists mentioned using songs to deliver a message (*memberi pesan, menyuarakan pesan,*

marahnya, *when they back to the social, they will be like a peace guy*, karena sudah marahnya sudah lari ke situ."

or *menyebarkan pesan*). Their methods for delivering a message extended beyond song lyrics, however, and even beyond the stage, as I will demonstrate there. As Berger notes, “performances dramatize a stance-on-power of earnest resistance to domination, knowing experience, brave and understated commitment” (2009, 119). I would add, further, that performers’ actions off the stage publicize a stance-on-power by building upon their subjectivities as known and admired artists to motivate action by others. Therefore, in order to avoid objectifying *lagu kritik sosial* as texts interpreted by audiences, I will instead refer to their work through music as “messaging,” and to the wide range of practices directed toward social change—including songwriting, performance, streets rallies, social media commentary, and more—as music activism.

In Bali, as elsewhere in Indonesia, environmental crises resulting from overdevelopment, pesticide use, and poor waste management threaten the island’s biodiversity and intensify the human crises of social inequity. Bali’s swelling number of annual domestic and foreign tourists and the frenzied expansion of infrastructure to accommodate them—despite a previous moratorium on new hospitality building developments—illustrate that unrestrained growth in the tourism sector continues to lack evaluative forethought, even after an infamous *TIME* article likened the modern Bali vacation to a “holiday in hell” (2011). Robi and his wife Lakota both argue that news sources and educational institutions have provided insufficient information on Bali’s social and environmental issues (interview, 2010), nor have they connected such issues to tourism development, and governmental institutions and NGOs largely fail to implement affective strategies to combat environmental degradation. In such an atmosphere of an

“island in crisis” (ibid., 2010), alternative modes for environmental reporting and action were urgently needed.

In my observations both in Bali and Jakarta, discussing particular social, political, economic, and environmental problems, particularly political corruption, is commonplace in everyday conversation. Most citizens feel alienated from and skeptical of leaders in politics and law enforcement—the result of perceived ineffectual governance and memories of catastrophic authoritarian rule under Suharto’s New Order (*Orde Baru*). The term *keadilan*, Indonesian for justice, was often employed when discussing solutions to these problems. Ideal justice in Indonesia meant achieving things such as political accountability, fair living wage and working conditions, accurate and affordable healthcare, women and children's rights, and environmental protection and disaster preparedness.

The goal of any activism is to draw awareness to a specific problem. Drawing awareness through music, which is repetitive and may be experienced by a large group of people can be a powerful means to consolidate attention among a large number of people. Social critique in the Indonesian performing arts is a very old tradition, visible in its most enduring theatrical forms. As Weintraub (2004) and Sutton (2002) illustrate, *wayang*, Indonesia’s puppet theatre, has often been a means to disseminate morality and social criticism. The musician most frequently cited for popularizing social critique in popular music is Javanese folk musician Iwan Fals. During the New Order regime, he became a political and musical icon (Lockard 1998). Iwan’s most popular ballads, recorded in the 1980s and 90s, legitimized the nation’s marginalized, from school teachers to street children to prostitutes, and covertly satirized its political leaders (ibid.). While

widespread censorship for media such as journalism, literature, and visual and performance arts has also been commonplace throughout Suharto's regime, many popular musicians enjoyed relative freedom of artistic expression (Lockard 1998 and Sutton 2004). Although his inflammatory songs did eventually lead to numerous bans on public performance and a brief arrest, Bang Iwan, as he was often affectionately called, became one of Indonesia's most nationally popular recording artists to date. Rock and pop musicians in Bali continued to pay homage to this icon throughout the 2000s, by covering his greatest hits in live performance, to which a majority of audience members always sang along. None was more frequently invoked in performance in Bali than Iwan's song "Bento," about a wealthy businessman lascivious for money and material pleasures, without any concern for other people's suffering. When performed, the song is sure to rally unanimous audience participation and spirited dance, an indication that economic injustice was a familiar topic for social critique in Indonesia.

As indicated previously, Iwan Fals has been an important influence on musicians in Bali, both for his songwriting style (Dadang, interview, 2010) and his calls for social justice, delivered via music (Robi, interview, 2010). While in interviews Iwan has suggested that his obligation as a performer is to become a spokesperson and educator for the Indonesian people, most of the artists I interviewed, considered themselves more akin to agents of public will—messengers of popular sentiment who sought to give poetic shape to shared discontent. Of course, Iwan was not the only source of inspiration for Balinese artists' music activism: Robi also pointed to other musical influences that helped him to imagine music as being an affective form of reporting and social critique: Listening to bands like Rage Against the Machine, Pearl Jam, and even John Lennon, he

commented, he realized that elsewhere, musicians had successfully provoked young people to play an active role in creating positive change. Robi also cited extra-musical influences for his songwriting style such as including colonial-era poet Chairul Anwar, as well as human rights activists such as Munir Said Thalib for inspiring him to take action, despite the adversity he may face. Munir was a lawyer who fought to bring to justice the government and military leaders responsible for carrying out Soeharto's orders to disappear several students in 1998. Sadly, Munir was assassinated by poisoning in 2004, while on board a Garuda flight to The Netherlands. Only the flight's co-pilot has been convicted and imprisoned for his role in the conspiracy to murder Munir. No one else involved, including high-ranking officials at the National Intelligence Agency, has ever stood trial for his death. In 2011, to mark the seventh anniversary of his murder, Navicula recorded a song titled "Refuse To Forget," an English-language condemnation of the crime that included such powerful lyrics as "I can see your bloody past, reflected on poisoned glass, you tried to hide it this in the sky, but we learned how to fly." The song charges that although one man may have been struck down because of his commitment to justice, millions will rise in his place to continue to demand it. Navicula worked together with anonymous artist "Anti-tank" to screen-print t-shirts bearing an iconic photograph of Munir that the artist has stenciled onto concrete walls and building facades throughout Jogjakarta for several years.²⁰ In his role as Dialog Dini Hari's frontman and songwriter, Dadang cited Pramoedya Ananta Toer, the novelist behind the globally renowned *Buru Quartet*, as a primary poetic influence. Pramoedya's works launched stark charges of

²⁰ Made Bayak, along with several other contemporary painters in Indonesia, have similarly memorialized images of the student activist, poet, and musician Widji Thukul, who was among the students disappeared in 1998.

racism and corruption against the Dutch colonial government, as well as Indonesia's first two presidents following independence.

It is important to note these historical influences because individuals like Robi and Dadang have directly cited them among their own personal influences. Returning to Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism, we see that the joint action of music activism by indie artists was not the result of individual impetus and creativity alone. Blumer writes, "...any instance of joint action, whether newly formed or long established, has necessarily arisen out of a background of previous actions..." (1993 [1969]). By drawing attention to the musical and extra-musical influences on indie musicians' social engagement, I also seek to problematize the common assumption within popular music studies—and articulated by Craig Lockard with regards to the Indonesian context—that rock and related popular music genres are "inherently oppositional musical form(s)" (1998, 34). In fact, historically, there have been many forms of activism in Indonesia, across artistic media and musical genres. And rock musicians taking on social, political, or environmental issues constitute the margin, not the norm. Furthermore, there is the problem of deciding what constitutes oppositional.

Artists' involvement in the recent presidential election serves as a case in point: In mid-2014, rock musician Ahmad Dhani produced an unlicensed reworking of Queen's "We Will Rock You" to endorse presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto. In the song's music video, Ahmad appears wearing the regalia of a Nazi general. As a military general under Soeharto, Prabowo has admitted to carrying out the former president's orders for the student disappearances in 1998. Does Ahmad's song constitute an oppositional trope? While his alignment with a human rights criminal may not sound oppositional, Ahmad

had, in fact, endorsed the losing candidate. Populist candidate Joko Widodo was elected president, and Ahmad Dhani was ridiculed in social media—and condemned by Queen guitarist Brian May over Twitter (25 July 2014)—for recording inflammatory song and donning a Nazi uniform to endorse a political candidate. On the other hand, Superman Is Dead performed a campaign concert for candidate Joko Widodo. Could an artistic endorsement for a successful presidential candidate really be called oppositional? There is, in fact, nothing about music that makes it oppositional or particularly suited to activism, nor does opposition necessarily mean a resistance to overcome oppressive force or hegemonic force. Rather, the lived experience of music-related practices situated in a specific historical and social context imbue music with this power.

In our interview together in 2010, Robi and Lakota argued that musicians play an important role in disseminating news to young fans who are either disenchanted or disinterested in print and broadcast news media. Furthermore, in a nation where news media is still heavily censored, and where television stations and newspapers have covertly (or blatantly, as was the case in the 2014 elections) endorsed politicians or corporations, artists may become primary sources of “honest” and hermeneutical reporting. Musicians may become primary sources of social critique by delivering messages that might otherwise have been censored.

Additionally, several research participants suggested that young people are more likely to listen to messaging about society or the environment if it is delivered through an artistic medium. As Nova from Scared of Bums explains, “Yeah for me, art works are easier for people to accept. It’s easier to influence people with art” (Nova, interview,

2011).²¹ Musicians like Nova understood that as performers on a stage, they could amplify message and disseminate it to a wider audience than one would be able to reach through one-on-one conversations or group dialogues. Several artists also indicated that the repetitive nature of music means that the message will be repeated, for easy remembering. As Arix Scared of Bums commented, “The message will be repeated. Over and over. And if we [as musicians] offer some social criticism it will surely be heard, rather than if we just talk and talk in front of people like politicians” (Arix, interview, 2011).²²

Activist Trailblazers

For more than fifteen years, Navicula has been at the forefront of music activism in Balinese rock. The band’s song lyrics and offstage activism have taken on issues as diverse as mass consumerism, palm oil’s impact on farmers and wildlife in Sumatra and Kalimantan, corruption in governance and medicine, and the Bali bombings. All seven studio albums and numerous compilation albums feature songs with social messaging, and a few examples will help to illustrate the range of topics they have covered: “Suram Wajah Negeri” (Land of Grim Faces), for example, was released in response to rising inter-religious conflict in Indonesia and became an anthem of protest for many Balinese in 2002, following the bombings in Kuta. In 2008, the government enacted a controversial anti-pornography law. Opponents in Bali—including bands like Navicula,

²¹ “Ya kalau bagi saya sih karya seni itu lebih gampang orang, mempengaruhi seseorang dengan karya seni.”

²² “Terus diulang-ulang. Pasti kan diulang-ulang. Jadinya kalau kita membuat kritik sosial pasti akan terus didengar daripada kita omong-omong terus di depan publik kan kayak politisi lah.”

Ed Eddy & Residivis, and Superman Is Dead—criticized the law as a violation of free expression and legalization of *sharia*. Robi considered the law inappropriate in the predominantly Hindu Balinese context (Robi, interview, 2009). Navicula responded to a draft of the law on its 2005 album *Alkemis* (Alchemist) with the song “Supremasi Rasa” (Supremacy of the Senses). On their 2007 album *Beautiful Rebel* the band took on political impotence through the song “Abdi Negri” (Domestic Servant), charging local and national governments with inaction, despite Indonesia’s transition into a democratic republic. The band’s sixth album, *Salto* (Somersaults), included several defiant songs of social criticism, including “Over Konsumsi” (Over-consumption), a song that implicates not only Indonesia, but also powerful Asian and Western nations for current global environmental crises, as well as “Metropolitan.” On their 2013 album *Love Bomb*, Navicula wrote several songs addressing deforestation, including “Orangutan,” “Bubur Kayu” (Wood Pulp), and “Di Rimba” (In the Forest), based on their direct experience with this serious environmental crisis.

These songs represent the breadth of issues explored in Navicula’s music. Of course, the band is not alone in their musical activism—though such activism is exceptional within the national recording industry. So-called market pressures usually relegate such artists to the industry’s peripheral indie charts. Furthermore, Robi and Lakota both commented that early in the band’s career, environmentally-themed songs were incomprehensible to the grunge fanbase who attended their shows and who had no understanding about issues like waste management to keep the waterways free of trash (explored in the song, “Kali Mati,” Dead River, *Alkemis*) or the importance of green spaces in urban environments (illustrated in “Zat Hijau Daun,” Green Substance,

Beautiful Rebel). It took several years and dedicated explanations from the stage for fans to begin to understand what the songs meant and follow Navicula's lead in promoting environmental conservation. Robi and Lakota's comments suggest that bands like Navicula may provide fans with their exposure to concepts like clean water or green urban planning. Lakota explained that it is not due to their lack of engagement, but a lack of awareness that their situation could be better: "When we live in a system that has always been broken since our birth, it is difficult for many people to appreciate the system as broken" (interview, 2010). Robi additionally acknowledged that the band's social and environmental messaging also limited their ability to attract a large audience. He commented, "For me personally, from the beginning I was conscious that the music that I play is really too idealist for the mainstream industry in Indonesia."²³ But for Robi and the rest of the bandmates, the sacrifice was worth making in order to be able to do what they loved and maintain their integrity as environmental activists: "That was what we already understood. Because we really care about our art, we only want to play what we love. So we were conscious that what we play may not be successful."²⁴

Most musicians engaged in music activism had in mind the end goal of communicating important messages in order to inspire audiences to take action. They imagined that change could happen if a collective consensus was reached that change was needed. This could be achieved by convincing audiences to deliver their messaging further within their own social circles and then to work together to find a solution. Several artists acknowledged that this may be alienating for a general fanbase who might

²³ "Kalo saya sendiri, dari dulu saya sadar bahwa musik yang saya mainkan sangat terlalu idealis untuk industri *mainstream* di Indonesia."

²⁴ Itu udah ketahuan sekali dan, kita karena sangat sayang sekali dengan karyanya kita, kita hanya mau main apa yang kita suka. So, kita sadar bahwa apa yang kita mainkan pasti nggak laku.

see their engagement with music as a form of liberation from everyday problems. But the possibility—rather than the certainty—that fans would take action was an important shared belief that strengthened artists commitment to disseminate messages, as well as their relationships with one another as co-workers within this domain of music activism. Occasionally artists reported on increased awareness and engagement among their fanbase. For example throughout Bali and much of Java, grunge as a genre is now associated with “green” messaging which, according to Robi and Lakota, and was based on Navicula’s impact within the scene, rather than what grunge artists from the US in the 1990s were singing about. Lakota offered as an example, “A lot fans used to email Navicula or contact us online and say “Keep grunge. Or end their letters with, ‘I hate myself and I want to die,’ from Nirvana. But recently, they often email and write, ‘Keep Grunge, Keep Green!’ Aha!” (Lakota, interview, 2010).²⁵

According to Yuri, former emcee for Geekssmile, song lyrics provide an opportunity to theoretically explore certain issues: “For us it’s not much different than writing a book or like scientific theory. It’s like creating a thesis or dissertation. For us, it’s just the same, because we conduct a series of observations as well. We also use references, so we don’t speak unmethodically. We also use theories from others” (Yuri, interview, 2009).²⁶ For example, the band’s song, “Street Junkie,” addresses the problem of complacency in Indonesia. While the song’s lyrics seem to center on narcotics use, in fact, the band also intended to problematize activists who fight to free people who

²⁵ “Banyak fans dulu sering email, sering email Navicula, lewat online gitu, *oh ya, keep grunge*. Atau *ending, ending* suratnya itu, *I hate myself and I wanna die*. Dari Nirvana, sana. Tapi baru baru ini, seringkali mereka email, *keep grunge, keep green!* Aaaa...”

²⁶ “Buat kami sama aja karena kami melakukan serangkaian observasi juga. Kita juga pakai referensi, jadi ga sembarangan ngomong jadi juga ada teorinya dari siapa, dari siapa gitu. Jadi punya fondasi lah gitu untuk di lirik. Juga secara musik, kita juga punya fondasi. Kita punya referensi gitu.”

actually do not know how to be free. They would rather live as addicts (Prima, interview, 2009). Guitarist Bayak insists, however, that the band wants to see change in Bali. He claimed that the band's role in addressing of social or political issues was to say in poetry and song what is difficult to express in everyday speech, even if this may limit their fanbase (interview 2009).

Lakota stopped short of claiming that Navicula can offer concrete solutions; rather, they were simply trying to motivate collective awareness about important issues: "We do not have the solution. Maybe what is needed is for all of us to move to find a solution, and then we'll be ready. Only society can provide the solution. Do they want to change? Do they want to apply that solution? That's the choice of individual people" (Lakota, interview, 2010).²⁷ Similarly, Eka, vocalist for Scared of Bums, insisted that the point is to at least try to deliver a message, even if the audience does not understand it or pass it on: Eka, vocalist for Scared of Bums, believed that remaining independent as an artist was essential to protect one's freedom of speech: He commented, "...maybe [the band] can deliver the messages that he has inserted into his songs. Maybe it will reach the ears of his listeners. Maybe there will be some who agree with his opinion and some who don't agree. Maybe that is a natural thing. But they still feel proud that what they were thinking about has actually reached other people. They don't know if it will be accepted and they don't care. They just want to speak from the heart and express their thoughts." (Eka, interview, 2011).²⁸

²⁷ "Kita tidak punya solusinya. Mungkin membutuhkan kita semua bergerak untuk mencari solusinya baru kita siap. Karena yang membuat solusi itu adalah masyarakat. Apakah mereka ingin berubah? Apakah mereka mau menerapkan solusi itu? Itu kan pilihan masing-masing orang."

²⁸ "Mungkin bisa nyampe pesan yang dia sisipkan di lagu itu. Mungkin nyampe ke telinga pendengar dia, mungkin akan ada bakalan beberapa yang setuju dengan pendapatnya itu dan ada yang tidak setuju dengan pendapat itu. Mungkin itu hal yang wajar tapi dia tetap merasa bangga dengan bahwa apa yang dia pikirkan

Activists At Home and On the Road

In addition to writing songs about particular issues, artists often took part in fundraising or awareness concerts called *konser amal*. Examples of such events included a 2009 concert held in Denpasar called “Stop Pemiskinan Sekarang” (Stop Poverty Now); a series of earthquake relief events held after the 2009 Padang earthquake; “Suara Untuk Alam” (A Voice for Nature), a 2012 orangutan conservation concert to launch Navicula’s music video for their song, “Orangutan,” and, most recently in late 2014, a series of beachside concerts held to protest a land reclamation project in Benoa Harbor under the theme, “Bali Tolak Reklamasi” (Bali Rejects Land Reclamation). While the fundraising potential of *konser amal* certainly contributed to their effectiveness, they were believed to be significant for deepening collaborative understandings of social justice, as suggested by concerts that bear the descriptor, *konser penyadaran* or consciousness-raising concerts. The scale of these events, which brought together hundreds or even thousands of people around a singular concern, served to formalize social commitment. Thus, they were an empowering means for artists and other scene leaders to accomplish particular transformative goals (Gamson 1991). In 2012 I was afforded the opportunity to experience directly how *konser amal* contribute to consciousness-raising when I directed an HIV/AIDS awareness concert in Ubud. At the time, I was working for a foundation that ran an education program called AYO! Kita Bicara HIV & AIDS (Hey! Let’s Talk About HIV & AIDS). I invited bands Dialog Dini Hari, Ganjil, and Nymphaea to perform,

itu sudah dia sampaikan ke orang lain. Entah itu diterima atau tidak dia ga peduli...Dia cuman ingin mengungkapkan isi hati dan pemikiran dia.”

as well as a reggae act from Jakarta, Ras Muhamad featuring Daddy T, and headlining the show, a rock Bali band native to Ubud, KiS Band.

Assured that the popularity of invited acts would draw in the audience we targeted—teenaged and young adult males, the population most susceptible to HIV infection—my production team turned our focus toward the humanitarian goal of the event: education about HIV and AIDS to combat their spread. We included messaging through live-broadcasted informational videos and commentary by the emcees during set changes. Rather than assuming the musicians’ primary role was to attract the audience, we took advantage of the precedent they had already set to provide messaging in song lyrics and asked them to help us disseminate information about HIV and AIDS through onstage commentary. Volunteer healthcare specialists met with performing artists during their sound checks to brief them on the primary messages they hoped the artists would share with the audience from the stage. For several weeks leading up to the concert, we met with each performing act to provide briefing materials and document interviews for a public service announcement (PSA) addressing their young fan base. The PSA was also broadcast on local television stations Bali TV and SCTV and live-broadcast on the video screen providing the backdrop for the Awareness Concert. What I found to be difficult was to verify that our strategies effectively educated our audience of nearly 10,000 to encourage them to use condoms and get tested for HIV. In our post-concert feedback sessions, however, the production team concluded that the repetition of broadcast messaging, onstage commentary, and visual information displays would help at least some people in the audience to retain some of the important lessons shared during the event.

On occasion, Bali-based bands have delivered their messaging to audiences beyond Bali: For example, Superman Is Dead, Navicula, and Nosstress all helped to publicize the Bali Tolak Reklamasi movement when they performed a concert titled *For Bali* at Rolling Stone Headquarters, Jakarta. Rudolf Dethu helped to secure the venue, in partnership with Wendi Putranto and the activists at the forefront of the movement, lawyer and head of Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (Indonesian Environment Forum), Bali Chapter, gave an impassioned speech to an audience of Jakartan urbanites about Bali's overdevelopment crisis.

In 2012, Navicula partnered with Greenpeace to raise awareness about illegal deforestation by launching a tour across inner Kalimantan. Usually, the main goal of a national tour is to promote a band (generally following an album release) in order to expand its audience, meet with media, sell merchandise, and perhaps contract a distribution label. Navicula's Kalimantan tour was different: The bandmates arrived in Borneo, not for professional self-promotion, but as music ambassadors for Greenpeace. After successful crowd-funding on Kickstarter.com to cover their tour expenses, they spent nearly two weeks on the road with Greenpeace and other participating environmental and cultural NGOs. Live gigs were superseded by other activities, including photograph and film documentation, meetings with local community heads, and spray-painting the campaign banners Greenpeace secured and photographed at strategic locations throughout the tour, sporting phrases like "Forest Crime" and "Land Not For Sale." The bandmates also took turns riding off-road motorbikes together with Greenpeace riders, dressed from head to toe in tiger stripes, a part of Greenpeace's ongoing deforestation awareness campaign that began in Sumatra the year before.

Navicula played only two large outdoor concerts, to open and close the tour, Palangkaraya and Pontianak. According to drummer Gembull, performing songs like “Harimau! Harimau!” (Tiger! Tiger!) or “Bubur Kayu” (Wood pulp) in Borneo, after seeing the degree of devastation in a region currently losing forest cover more rapidly than anywhere else on the planet, was an eye-opening experience for the band. The band came face-to-face with a landscape—of which more than 80 percent was once covered by resource-rich rainforests—that is being stripped naked of virgin forest and re-blanketed with an ugly mono-crop of oil palms. An estimated two million acres were cleared in the little more than a year since the Indonesian government declared a moratorium on new concessions for forest use. The tour deepened their understanding of what was at stake and, according to Robi, helped to strengthen the commitment of all four bandmates to continue to take on environmental issues in their music. I also took part in this momentous tour and learned alongside the band. I arrived in Kalimantan with only an abstract sense of the gravity of the situation and left sharing their grim determination to combat this environmental and social injustice—a determination that was greatly strengthened by firsthand experience, in the company of others.

Offstage Activism

For many musicians, activism did not end when they exited the stage. Using their prominent social status as well-known performers or their specialized knowledge in other fields, they continued to pursue social justice through means other than performance. A common phrase used by Jerinx, Robi, and others to describe this domain of activism is “Aksi turun ke jalan” (Taking to the streets). It implied a grassroots activism to engage

Balinese citizens beyond the bounded experience of a music concert, through street rallies and demonstrations. Thus, SID would encourage their fanbase to take to the streets on the low rider bicycles popularized by the bands as a form of parade rally or gather in front of the governor's office or important city landmarks like the massive Bajra Sandhi monument, bearing placards, banners, and flags publicizing a specific cause.

Furthermore, artists often shared their social critiques via social media channels and by publicizing campaigns or petitions created through Change.org; sharing videos and news reports; and providing general commentary or calls to action through written discourse.

The specialized knowledge Robi shares through music comes largely from his extra-musical professional activities as an organic farmer with family farm in Tabanan, as well as a certified permaculturist. He has also worked as a consultant for the Bali-based environmental organization IDEP Foundation, the Australia-Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction (AIFDR) and Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, the Indonesian Center of Scientific Knowledge. In 2009, following the devastating earthquakes in Sumatra, Robi accompanied a team from AIFDR to Padang to create art installations and educational workshops for local youth about natural disaster preparedness.

In 2011, frustrated with the lack of environmental reporting in traditional news media, Robi and Lakota helped to launch *Akarumput* (Grassroots), an organization that combined online news reporting and grassroots action to address Bali and greater Indonesia's environmental and social concerns. Through a bilingual, online magazine and public programs on urban farming, eco-art, and reducing plastic consumption, Robi and Lakota hoped that *Akarumput* would not only raise environmental awareness, but also encourage direct action. Lakota shares with Robi a professional background in

environmental work: She has media design and communications strategies for both local and national NGOs. She worked for the IDEP Foundation and additionally supported permaculture development teams in Aceh and Timor Leste by facilitating communication between local farmers and community members and the NGOs there to support them. In her experience, Lakota was disappointed to see that such projects were undermined by funding limits and truncated timelines—some projects were only supported by a field team for three to four months, and they quickly lost momentum after the NGOs departed.

Individually, each artist may be focused within a circumscribed field on a narrow topic, or guided by perhaps only one problem-solving approach. Collectively, however, their combined skills, interests, and methods contributed to the accuracy, relevance, and value of songwriting, performances, and off-stage activism. Musicians like Robi, Jerinx, and Bayak shared a stance toward the power of music and art to change deep-seated beliefs and shake people out of their complacency, but they also believed that in order to achieve their goals, they must work together, not just within music, but across other domains of practice and types of artistic expertise: As Robi explained, “We see [our different interests] as the potential to make a positive change in Indonesia, or Bali specifically. We are conscious that the changes can be bigger (we can create a bigger movement) if activities do not happen in isolation” (interview, 2012). Working together—sharing resources and information across a broad spectrum of individuals and creative media was a key of music activism within the indie scene. Music activism is part and parcel to the cosmopolitan ethos of the indie scene: According to Appiah, cosmopolitanism combines two tenets on humanity that result from a recognition of cultural plurality and deepening empathy toward others. He writes, “...we have

obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance” (2006, Loc. 138).

Music Activism and Risk (For Artist and Ethnomusicologist)

While generally musicians have not encountered as much direct censorship as news and other communications media, music activism can be risky, as Iwan Fals experienced by his jail time and performance ban. In the 1960s, members of the band Koes Plus were imprisoned, not because their music was overtly political, but because they had dared to play rock n’ roll. President Soekarno declared this genre originating from an “imperialistic” America as unsuitable for Indonesian ears and implemented a ban on its performance.

In Bali, the most common form of censorship has been to deny bands performance permits: Early in their careers, SID struggled to gain permission to host outdoor concerts. Dethu suggested this was due to their “bad boy status;” in the 1990s, President Suharto set a precedent of treating all tattooed young men as dangerous dissidents and drug users, and SID and other hard rock acts were cast in the same light. In 2004, the Balinese Hindu regulatory commission, Parishada Hindu Dharma insisted that Navicula change the cover of its album, *Alkemis*—which bore a number of religious symbols that the board found objectionable—before it was permitted to be distributed in

Bali. In 2007, singer Ed Eddy and lyricist and guitarist Igo Blado became the first musicians to be arrested for their music since the fall of Suharto. They were criminally charged and convicted of intentionally and publicly insulting a state institution.²⁹ The grounds for their arrest and imprisonment was a song titled “Anjing,” (Dog), which local police speculated was directed at them.

Sometimes, despite the best intentions, acts of protest simply fell short. Fans failed to understand esoteric lyrics. Charity events were cancelled. In the case of the 2010 Live Earth Run for Water in Bali, the very cause for the event was undermined by poor planning and a lack of funds. After all major sponsors pulled out two days before Live Earth, a global concert series launched by Al Gore, organizers scrambled to change the venue to the infamous Pecatu Hotel and Resort in Bukit. Pecatu had recently come under fire for redirecting water used by neighboring rice farmers for irrigation to refresh its own golf greens. Bands Slank, God Bless, Superman Is Dead, Glen Fredly, and Navicula consented to perform. But always the activist, Robi addressed the event’s sobering irony with angry comments directed at the site manager present, just before Navicula performed their song “Pantai Mimpi” (Dream Beach), written one year prior in direct response to Pecatu’s destruction of nearby beaches.

I asked Robi if he thought that he would be more effective working full-time with an NGO or other environmental organization in order to achieve measureable results.³⁰ Robi replied that NGOs are not necessarily any more effective than musicians, and certainly not when it comes to changes people’s perspectives on specific issues. He said,

²⁹ Freemuse, an international organization advocating for musician’s freedom from repression and censorship, released a report on Eddy and Igo’s conviction (McAuliffe 2007)—a violation of freedom of speech largely unheard of since the fall of Soeharto.

³⁰ See “Chapter 5” in the research blog for an excerpt of Robi and Lakota discussing the role music plays in environmental action (<http://baliunderground.com/chapter-5/>).

“let music convey something that is also fun. Let it be fun. Through means that are more ‘serious,’ like NGOs or nonprofits, there is no guarantee that they will make a radical change within society, let alone change a culture that has been going in the same direction for years. But I believe that water can make a hole in a stone. So if you do something, do it consistently” (Robi, interview, 2010).³¹ Robi’s comment points to a commonly shared belief among artists that part of music’s affect lies in the enjoyment people experience when engaging it, particularly through live performance. Prima Geekssmile, similarly, said that if his band could influence one person, then that could plant the seed and spread the message slowly: “We prefer to pick one person in the front when we’re playing. But he can influence his friends, to do something good, to understand the message that we have conveyed.”³²

Music activism directs music-making toward specific social, political, and environmental objectives. In Berger’s terms, it allows for “the focusing of attention—the ability to pick out one item among many and hold it firmly in the center of consciousness...” (Berger 2009)—on particular issues that musicians identify as crucial for the greater good. While music activism can help to direct collective attention toward shared goals and, thus, strengthen relationships, there are also many other challenges that threaten to disentangle any music scene. Of course any music scene requires that there are individuals making music together. What are the threats to that possibility and how do artists overcome—or why do they succumb to these threats?

³¹ “Iya, maksudnya, janganlah yang lewat musik yang lebih banyak menyampaikan sesuatu lewat *fun*, secara *fun* gitu ya. Lewat cara-cara serius aja seperti LSM atau *NGO* aja, belum tentu bisa mengubah, mengubah sesuatu masyarakat secara radikal. Apalagi untuk mengubah suatu kultur yang sudah berjalan selama bertahun-tahun. Tapi saya percaya, air bisa membuat lubang batu gitu, apabila kamu melakukannya secara konsisten.”

³² “Kami lebih memilih satu orang di depan, kami main tapi mereka bisa mempengaruhi teman-teman, dia bisa mempengaruhi teman-temannya untuk melakukan hal yang baik. Untuk mengerti pesan yang kami sampaikan itu apa, seperti itu.”

“We’re used to you people coming here and doing your projects, but then you leave, and leave nothing behind. When do we get something out of this? What the fuck, man?”

—Gung Alit, addressing scholars during Q&A at the Bali in Global Asia Conference, July 17, 2012³³

Bumi Manusia (This Earth of Mankind) (1980), a classic literary work once banned in Indonesia, was written by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, an Indonesian writer once jailed for his audacious social critiques. The narrator, a young Javanese man called Minke, says, “a learned person, a scholar, must also learn to be just, not only within his thoughts, but also within his actions.”³⁴ This study concludes with a rather unorthodox turn of attention to the scholar’s role, in both her fields of research and professionalism.

Directed advocacy aims the lessons of field research toward pragmatic ends and humanitarian benefit. Rylko-Bauer and colleagues argue that all anthropologists are involved in advocacy by their very participation in a field that seeks to deepen our understanding of human nature. They suggest that degrees of engagement with advocacy are conceived along a continuum; anthropologists who address “broad disciplinary goals” are positioned at one end, while those engaged in “direct action and promoting rights and needs of specific groups in conflicted situations” are situated at the other (ibid., 184).

Historically, advocacy work in ethnomusicology has been directed toward cultural brokerage and conservation or salvage projects to preserve “endangered” performing arts

³³ The conference was hosted by the Netherlands-based International Institute for Asian Studies and was open to the public. Alit attended as a “community member.” He is a Balinese social activist, founder of a fair trade company, and co-founder of Taman 65 (Garden of ‘65), an organization commemorating the six members of Alit’s extended family (including his father) who were murdered during the 1965–66 massacres. Taman 65 is dedicated to community discourse, education, and activism and is headquartered at Alit’s family compound in Kesiman, Bali.

³⁴ Translated from the original Indonesian publication: “Seorang terpelajar harus juga belajar berlaku adil sudah sejak dalam pikiran, apalagi perbuatan” (1980:34).

(Davis 1992). More recent projects, focused on music, healing, and advocacy, have developed into the sub-discipline of medical ethnomusicology, and medical ethnomusicologists have been some of the field's staunchest "advocates" for "advocacy work," particularly those working with music and HIV and AIDS in Africa (see Barz and Cohen 2011; Van Buren, 2010). Anthony Seeger, ethnomusicologist and advocate for land rights for the Suyá Indians, commented in a 2012 interview for his own Department of Music at UCLA: "I have always felt that the purpose of knowledge was to use it in order to benefit people or groups of people. It seems to me that scholars have an ethical responsibility to find ways to communicate what they have learned to audiences outside the University, and for purposes of social and political action" (Seeger 2012). Similarly, Slovenian ethnomusicologist Svanibor Pettan urges that "scholars should at least occasionally break away from a position of contemplative self-sufficiency, the so-called ivory tower of academia, and efficiently employ their knowledge and understanding of music in the broadest sense for the betterment of humanity" (2010: 90).

My early activist work in Indonesia was relatively ad hoc; I was motivated by the number of music professionals I observed addressing political corruption, poverty, interreligious conflict, and environmental degradation through songwriting and grassroots activism to find my own means to support these crucial movements. I began with the conventional channels of documentation, by writing and presenting about these individuals in academic and public forums. Initially I focused on the work of Navicula, a band that provoked me to question what modes of engagement would bring me closer to direct action. Rather than jumping headfirst into one of the many social and environmental causes with which research consultants were involved, however, I opted to

direct my activism toward causes most urgent to me, personally and professionally, and which ethnomusicology prepares me to confront: I chose to act for the sustainability of Bali's diverse independent music industry, and I selected the professional domains of practice, including event production, publicly accessible writing, and public presentations, as channels to pursue this goal. In addition to extending performance opportunities to indie scene musicians, I also seized opportunities to further cultivate artistic collaborations as a means of strengthening scene relations, both within and beyond Bali. For example in 2012, when I invited Navicula to perform at the BaliSpirit Festival, I asked them to perform acoustic, knowing that this format would be a better fit for the crowd of mostly foreigners attending the festival's yoga classes. I also hoped to add another female voice to the program's line-up—in part, because I thought it would improve reception with this particular audience, but also because of my own activist agenda to provide more performance opportunities for women. I asked Navicula if they would collaborate with Kartika Jahja, a singer I had met while on tour with Dialog Dini Hari in Jakarta. Navicula readily agreed, and Tika performed three songs with the band during their set. The performance opportunity helped to deepen Navicula's creative relationship with Tika by giving them an unprecedented opportunity to rehearse together. That performance was followed by others in which Tika joined Navicula onstage: firstly, for an acoustic set in Medan, North Sumatra, and the next year, for Navicula's album launch at @america.

Recognizing that theoretical and pragmatic objectives are not mutually exclusive, advocates for public anthropology or ethnomusicology argue for what Peacock describes as a “synergy between theory and practice” (1997, 13). Ethnomusicology prepared me for

undertaking public service in important ways. Operating under the ethnomusicological assumption that musicians, as social leaders delivering messages through the potent expressive medium of music, can shape social perceptions and values, I entered into the service of staging public concerts with the conviction that music performance can disseminate important knowledge. Furthermore, in the case of the HIV and AIDS Awareness Concert, believing that music-related practices are important strategies for strengthening social relationships, I viewed the concert experience as an opportunity to develop the collective empathy necessary to combat the social stigma surrounding disease. My experiences managing the HIV and AIDS Awareness Concert solidified my commitment to public ethnomusicology: if one concert could reach an audience larger than I could amass in a decade of publishing scholarly articles, attending conferences, and teaching at a university, then surely its value as a communications medium is immeasurable. As applied ethnomusicologist Daniel Sheehy writes of the value of the applied approach,

[It] challenges us to communicate to a diversity of other people in ways they can understand...It challenges us to see beyond the “institutional blinders” that limit our view of important issues for research and that close our minds to ways of applying our special knowledge. It challenges us to think bigger and better about our reciprocity with the people we study...It challenges each of us to examine our roles and responsibilities as ethnomusicologists in an environment much larger than the university (Sheehy 1992: 334– 35).

That academic professionalism rewards individual excellence rather than group effort is a truism. Work in the public interest, however, requires collaborative professionalism: a mutual tuning in to shared goals. As both researcher, public ethnomusicologist, and friend to these music producers for more than six years, I was also invested in the industry’s good health. Furthermore, like other music professionals,

my work was also deeply informed by the shared value of collaboration. My coworkers and I were conscious that the more knowledge we shared in common, the more likely we were to be aligned toward and achieve our professional goals.

The Ties that Unwind

Between 2008 and 2014, several bands experienced personnel changes or stopped performing altogether: Ed Eddy & Residivis, for example, broke up when frontman Eddy relocated permanently to Australia with his family. Geekssmile lost vocalist and emcee Yuri when he abruptly left the group, shortly after they finalized mastering for their second studio album. Dialog Dini Hari's original drummer and bassist were replaced by new players, and while bands Telephone, Debuntu, The Wheels, and Psychopathic never officially broke up, they stopped performing together regularly.

Interestingly, the reasons that artists cited for personnel turnover or band breakups rarely referred to disagreements about musical style or professional direction. Rather, usually one or more members of the group complained about pressing family obligations or the band's inability earn enough money for them to support their families. Artists often said that they needed to prioritize family or community obligations, including obligatory contributions to the *banjar* and village ceremonies. Within The Hydrant, the band members have tried to avoid breaking up by reaching a formal agreement to put their families before career. While Marsello indicates that this mean taking fewer gigs than they would like, at least this ensures that they are meeting their obligations to their families. He commented, "We have sacrificed more than a few gigs because of family

obligations. We won't sacrifice family for music" (Marsello, interview, 2013). Marmar cited family obligations as the primary reason his band Psychopathic no longer plays together regularly: "But now it's already common [to not play] because [my bandmates] have their own families who demand that they don't play music" (Marmar, interview, 2011).³⁵ Most dramatically, between 2008 and 2010, two Balinese musicians active within the indie scene were ostracized from their village *banjar* for failing to meet their financial obligations and attend important temple ceremonies and rituals. These young men are no longer considered Balinese Hindu: they have lost their membership in the village and may not be buried there. Both artists suggested, however, that their preoccupation with music was not the only reason they were ostracized, though it certainly limited their capacity to serve their village.

Almost all artists complained about an inability to make enough money to justify spending so much time making music. Back in 2009, Superman Is Dead estimated that approximately 60% of their livelihood comes directly from music. While most musicians were realistic that making a living exclusively from their music was not possible, most also agreed that it was something they still aspired to accomplish. Yet if even a band signed with a major label contract can only earn 60% of their income from music, then not surprisingly, musicians have had to make tough decisions about how much time they can invest without receiving fair compensation. Dethu pointed out that this problem affects not only musicians, but also other music professionals: In the late 2000s, although bands were beginning to achieve professional status, the resources to compensate support teams including managers, sound engineers, and visual artists was still insufficient. This

³⁵ "Tapi sekarang sudah terbiasa karena sudah berkeluarga jadi kebutuhan keluarganya yang menuntut dia nggak bisa bermain music."

has been a consistent problem, even in 2014. Navicula has tried to lay ground rules about how the band invests the money they earn together from music so that the band can be more financially stable and not take money earned from other professional activities to support their music: In other words, everything they do as musicians must be financed with money they earn from the band's own previous profits (*keuntungan*). Thus, money received from gigging, album sales, sponsorship, or merchandise is, ideally, the only money used to stage a tour, produce a new album, or buy new equipment.

The third most commonly cited challenge to scene sustainability is a lack of good venues for performance. In the six-year period that I attended live performances in Bali, more than a dozen live performance venues closed their doors due to bankruptcy or changed their music programming and ceased to welcome local bands. When Anom Darsana founded Serambi Arts Antida in 2011, his goal was to address this very problem (interview, 2010). He wanted to offer the island's urban youth performance and educational opportunities in the visual and performing arts, with a strong emphasis on band culture. During its brief history, Serambi became a nerve center for Bali's collective of indie scene professionals, who utilized the space for rehearsals, meetings, and socializing. Having a place to gather like Serambi Arts Antida deepened social relationships within the indie scene and contributed positively to the musical creativity and output of a burgeoning number of artists.

In 2012, the leaseholder for the land on which Serambi Arts Antida was constructed—a British national—met with Anom and conveyed his intention to close the center and sell the land to a private proprietor. Anom tried to purchase the land himself, but due to the leaseholder's outrageous asking price and the insufficient timeframe given

to raise the necessary funds, the venue was forced to close. Thankfully in 2013, Anom was able to revive his dream of opening a live music venue by converting the parking lot in front of the studio into a small outdoor café, complete with a small stage. Soundgarden held its inaugural event in September 2013.

In addition to the closure of venues, scene participants continued to struggle to obtain permits for live performance. The elusive *izin keramaian* (public event permit) often required bribes to *banjar* and police that were beyond the means of those organizing the events. Furthermore, there was some prejudice based on genre, with regards to who could obtain a permit. Concert organizers creating a metal or punk event, for example, were less likely to obtain a performance permit than those proposing a jazz or pop event (Anom, interview, 2010). This prejudice toward hard rock events may relate to metal's demonization in the 1990s throughout Indonesia, following the Jakarta riots that took place after Metallica played its first concert there. For several years, heavy metal performances were banned altogether. In my own experience acquiring permits for live events, I often encountered the assumption that events featuring rock music would encourage drug or alcohol use or result in fights among audience members.

Arix Scared of Bums argued that the provincial government's lack of understanding about rock music and its performance aesthetics may cause authorities to misinterpret fan actions like moshing or pogo dancing as inciting violence, when in fact, audiences are actually taking part in preexisting dance styles and expressing their enjoyment through movement. But he also suggested the government may fear young people will abandon aspects of their Balinese heritage if they condone rock music performance. He commented,

I think probably the reason the government doesn't support us is because they have an impression about how people express their appreciation of what they experience at concerts. For example, the pogo dance. Maybe the government sees that as an effect of rock music that causes violence, when actually they're just expressing themselves. They're responding to what they hear. But sometimes the government in Bali in particular, does not understand audience expression in rock music...Additionally, the development of rock music in Bali, I think in the years since I was in high school, has already increased. Judging from recent events there must be some rock music elements. And the government may also be afraid that if youth purely support rock music, then they will leave their Balinese culture...³⁶

Chapter 2 explored rock music's marginalization by other music professionals and cultural tourism developers. However, there was a general consensus among artists that many parents in Bali are also concerned that if their children attend rock music concerts, they will use drugs or alcohol or engage in other licentious behaviors. In fact, heavy alcohol use was quite common at live concerts, and in some cases, so was drug use. Several artists have admitted to struggling with alcohol and narcotics abuse in the past, and one artist, violinist Dandu, who often performed with Dialog Dini Hari, lost his life after drinking a palm wine that had been accidentally poisoned during the fermentation process. Motorbike accidents due to intoxication were also quite common.

As Sari noted, drug and alcohol abuse may be one reason that many women are forbidden to attend rock concerts, let alone perform rock music. There tended to be a double standard for acceptable public behavior, however, and while more parents allowed their sons to attend rock events (as evidenced by the crowds of thousands of young men

³⁶ “Mungkin menurut saya pemerintah, mengapa tidak memajukan musik rock karena terkesan sih di setiap konser kan pasti ada orang mengapresiasi apa yang dilihat. Contohnya, seperti pogo-pogo, musik-musik, mungkin itu yang dilihat sama pemerintah bahwa inilah efek dari musik rock menjadi rusuh padahal itu mereka mengekspresikan dirinya apa sih yang didengar dan ekspresi dirilah seperti itu. Tapi kadang-kadang pemerintah di Bali khususnya, kurang memahami ekspresi musik penonton dari musik rock...Dan juga perkembangan musik rock di Bali sih menurut saya dari tahun-tahun sih dari saya suka dari SMA udah mengalami peningkatan. Dilihat dari acara-acara musik tuh pasti ada musik rock unsur rock. Dan juga pemerintah mungkin yang ditakuti, mengapa ga terlalu *mempure* mendukung musik rock, biar tidak yang saya bilang tadi kan, anak muda sekarang kan seolah-olah meninggalkan budayanya...”

that could gather for a popular act like SID), despite their perceived risk of exposure to drugs and alcohol, daughters were not afforded this same freedom. Sari explained that this double standard is a sign that parents think their daughters are not able to protect themselves the same way that sons can: “The majority of Indonesian parents, as far as I know, most parents still forbid their daughters to participate in the world of music, let alone rock. Any music is thought to be associated with drugs, drinking alcohol, and other activities like that. So with their daughters they are more careful, maybe because it is generally thought that girls cannot take care of themselves like boys can” (Sari, interview, 2010).³⁷ Of course, Sari’s experience was different. Her Balinese father was very supportive of her as a musician: “Luckily, when my dad was still young, he liked to play in a band, too. And my other family—uncles, aunts—all had their own bands and they played together as a family. And with regards to my mother, well whatever you like you can do, really, my mom was like that” (ibid.)³⁸

All musicians experienced some audience harassment during performance at some point, particularly when they played in front of an audience unfamiliar with their music. Typical audience behavior that artists interpreted as negative and harassing included making loud jokes at the artists’ expense, sitting down during performance, and even throwing things at the stage. For Sari, however, harassment was more common and frequently sexual in nature. Though these experiences anger her, she said she used the opportunity to deliver her own message on treating women with respect:

³⁷ “Mayoritas, kalau di Indonesia setahu saya kebanyakan orang tua merasa jangan gitu apa lagi dunia musik nggak harus rock saja. Musik saja sudah dianggap berhubungan dengan obat-obatan, minuman, alcohol dan segala macam, kayak gitu. Jadi, lebih was-was kalau anak perempuan, mungkin sudah pikiran umum bahwa anak perempuan tidak bisa menjaga diri seperti anak laki-laki jadi bawaannya ya seperti itu.”

³⁸ “Untungnya keluarga saya dulu, Papa saya waktu muda memang suka punya band juga, dan keluarga om dan tante-tante saya juga semuanya punya band gitulah mereka bermusik semua satu keluarga gitu. Dan kalau mama saya, udah apa yang kamu suka ya jalani, memang mama udah orangnya kaya gitu jadi.”

Usually these are people who don't know Nymphaea, because when we play in areas where we already have a fanbase, they're certainly polite and courteous. They have a good relationship with us. Only sometimes with new people that use those slovenly words... well, sometimes when my emotions have really been triggered I'll start lecturing from the stage, to let that person know how to appreciate a woman. Guys like that have to think, what if someone talked to my mom or my sister that way. It's just I don't know if these guys are hard to educate or what. Sometimes I get really mad to hear that talk, but I just keep going because it's not going to cause something inside of me to want to stop" (ibid.)³⁹

During my time in Bali, I noticed an emergent elitism among key players within the professional music industry that I feared also risked social fragmentation: participants were often ranked by their education, maturity, musical talent, and discursive prowess. Even well-known musicians may be subjected to harsh criticism if, for example, their music was judged to lack musicality or originality, their fanbase was composed of mostly under-educated teenagers (or females), or they lacked competency with online social networking media. The term *kampung* (provincial) was often derisively assigned to such artists.

Dethu and Igo's screening process for organizing live events serves as an example of how scene leaders exerted their power to welcome some and exclude others. Dethu explained, "If a band has put out an album or demo, they can give it to us, we'll listen to it. If he deserves to play, then he must play first. They have to be the opening act. If he's good, then that means at the next event or the next month, they can move up. And the first slot, the opening slot that will be replaced with the next band to send a demo that

³⁹ "Biasanya mereka orang-orang, nggak tau Nymphaea ya, misalnya ke daerah mana baru orang-orang yang fanbase sudah pasti sopan-sopan semua, baik hubungan dengan kita. Cuman dengan orang-orang baru lihat ya, kata kata apalah, yang jorok-jorok sering kedengaran seperti itu. Em, kadang kadang sih kalau emang pada saat Sari se-ikit terpicu emosinya biaranya Sari suka mengomel diatas panggung biar, biar gimana ya orang itu lebih bisa, eh, menghargai wanita. Jangan orang-orang lelaki yang seperti itu harus berpikir bagaimana kalau ibu saya atau adik saya yang perempuan dikasih omongan seperti itu apakah saya nggak marah, harusnya dia mikir gitu. Cuman nggak tau ya ni cowo-cowo susah diajar, jadi ya. Kadang sih suka marah emosi dengar-dengar gitu tapi ya tetap jalan kenapa itu nggak bakalan menjadi sesuatu yang memberhentikan dalam ini saya gitu."

deserves it. So they can't play from the beginning. We have a selection process. Our screening system is already clear."⁴⁰ Dethu claimed that he was not just selecting bands that he likes, but using his instincts, based on many years of experience, to choose the music that will help the scene to become sustainable and Bali's music to be appreciated, "...so that Bali moves up a level. It isn't only about underground roots."⁴¹ Anom also relied on "instinct," though he took a slightly more optimistic view on which artists he supported: He described the way he selected which groups to support, not in terms of the group's specific technical prowess or stage presence, but rather in terms of an instinct that the group will succeed: "If I want [to support], then I know that means I believe in my heart that this group will be good, you know."⁴² But inevitably these screening processes will welcome some and distance others.

Several research participants also shared overarching prejudices about a lack of originality among bands in Indonesia, as well as a tendency for audiences to follow trends, rather than try something new: Aldo Sianturi suggested that all Indonesians tend to follow, rather than innovate: "The basis of the Indonesian nation is not innovative, you see. The basis is plagiaristic: Copy and paste..." (Sianturi, interview, 2010).⁴³ Similarly, Robi suggested that Balinese youth's unwillingness to choose a road less traveled could negatively impact the music scene by stifling creativity. He commented, "Balinese teenagers—this generation of Balinese—have the really strong tendency to just follow.

⁴⁰ "Kalau dia baru ngeluarin album atau demo, dia bisa kirim kita. Kita dengar. Kalau dia layak untuk main, dia harus main paling pertama. Jadi, dia harus main *opening*, dan semua orang akan lihat. Kalau dia bagus berarti di *next event*, di berikutnya atau bulan depannya, dia sudah naik. Dan *slot* di depan ini, *opening* ini akan diganti dengan pengirim demo berikutnya yang layak. Kita punya jenjang. Jadi tidak asal bisa main. Kita punya seleksi. *Screening* nya kita jelas."

⁴¹ "Jadi Bali biar naik tingkatan gitu. Bukan cuma asal underground aja."

⁴² "Kalau saya pingin, saya tahu berarti saya percaya dengan hati saya bahwa grup ini nanti akan bagus ya."

⁴³ "Basis bangsa Indonesia kan bukan bangsa inovatif, gitu. Basis bangsanya, basis bangsa *plagiarism*, gitu *copy paste* gitu."

There is a kind of contradiction between Balinese who are creative and always innovating, with a generation now that just follows whatever already exists.⁴⁴ Robi cited repertoire standardization through mass tourism, as well as mass consumer entertainment like television as two causes for an increasingly complacent and lazy attitude toward creative expression. These attitudes may point to a genuine tendency to favor familiar expressive cultures; however, they also create a hierarchy between artists and audiences who appreciate innovation (indie insiders) and those who passively consume the status quo (indie outsiders).

Artists recording in the Balinese language, *basa Bali*, rather than the *lingua franca*, *bahasa Indonesia* were also occasionally derided, primarily because their music only appeals to an island-wide fanbase: The Indonesian language would give these artists access to a broader, national market; and some music professionals complained that such artists have confined themselves to a musically underdeveloped, regional market, simply by their language choice. Such prejudices seemed to be at odds with a concurrent ethos of pride in the local, widespread in the indie scene. They alienated several of the island's best-known Balinese language acts and disregarded the performers most likely to garner the largest audience for live events. As Dethu noted, if one wants a flood of fans (*banjir penggemar*), one need only invite a Balinese-language rock band (interview, 2010).

When I selected featured performers for the HIV and AIDS Awareness Concert in 2012, I encountered criticism from several research participants regarding my choice to feature Balinese language KiS Band as a headliner. When I asked what was wrong with featuring such an act in the final slot for the evening, rather than offering this slot to the

⁴⁴ “Remaja Bali, generasi Bali punya cenderung, *tendencies*, ikut-ikutan kuat sekali. ada semacam kontradiksi antara orang Bali yang kreatif, yang selalu inovasi, dengan generasi sekarang yang mengikuti apa yang sudah ada.”

Jakarta act, responses suggested that KiS Band's music was not "as good as" the Jakarta act. My goal, however, was to uphold the educational objective of the event by targeting the fanbase of teenage and young adult men from the Ubud area that compose KiS Band's primary audience. Furthermore, KiS Band had been an important supporter for AYO! Kita Bicara HIV & AIDS since it was founded in 2010. I realized that inviting the band would provide a valuable opportunity to challenge assumptions about "musical value" within the indie scene. By engaging a "critical phenomenology" (Berger 1999), I argued that regardless of their perceived musical proficiency or lack thereof, Balinese language bands' popularity among a local audience was valuable and worth taking seriously.

Nowhere was discursive elitism in the indie scene more palpable than online: The Internet is a communication tool that depends on a certain level of techno-cultural proficiency and literacy; therefore, it is not universally accessible for all Indonesian citizens. Bourdieu's (1984) explanation of taste, as education and economic class determine it, applicably frames Indonesian Internet practices: Power relations primarily corresponding to economic class and education level, in this case, determine who defines aesthetic and social value; and communicative and technological competence create a class of users on the Internet, with the most skillful users constituting a digital elite. Internet discourse among scene leaders, whether interactive, as on a social networking site, or mono-vocal, as in blog entries or personal websites, predominantly engaged public written discourse. It privileged rhetorical and technical virtuosity and those with "superior" language skills, and access to the Internet via computers or Smartphones. Those who lacked such skills, hardware, and connections were, for all practical purposes,

left out of the conversation. In the indie scene's communicative hierarchy, well-educated and talented writers—be they journalists, musicians, or well-informed fans—earned (or appropriated) the authority to speak on behalf of the scene. Often, this hierarchy was consciously reinforced. For example, on one occasion, a prominent music writer shared in a private email his frustration that SID's online profiles were overwhelmed with comments by a provincial (*kampungan*) and undereducated, teenage fanbase. The same writer criticized another musician for being *kampungan* in his Facebook status updates or Tweets, which tended to focus on mundane, day-to-day activities like what he had for dinner or being stuck in traffic, rather than taking advantage of his online popularity to initiate more “interesting” conversations and music or current events. In my experience, the Internet often underscored educational and economic class differences: Those less skilled in written communication or less acute in utilizing social networking media—to paraphrase Bourdieu, those less familiar with the rules of the game (1984, 54)—may be marginalized within, or excluded from, important conversations.

The Distanced Ethnographer

Inevitably, ethnographic research requires the researcher to contend with beliefs and actions that may be ethically problematic. I did not take such encounters as moments of professional crisis, but rather as opportunities for mutual exploration. But the subject position I was often assigned was a consistent source of discomfort and means of distancing me from the scene: My nationality and race aligned me with other foreigners visiting or living in this holiday destination. At least on first encounters, I was often

assigned an identity as a vacationing tourist, business investor, or backpacker taking months or years off from “real life” to seek adventure in travel. My identity as a music researcher was impossible to accept because most people had no experience with music researchers in Bali—or certainly not music researchers focused on rock music.

Furthermore, as a white expatriate in a postcolonial country, I was often privileged (burdened) with an inflated social position, which was compounded if my educational background was known.

I recall a Balinese lawyer and activist who often interacted with me with a degree of contempt. We crossed paths often at music concerts and other public gatherings because of our mutual interest in urban performing and visual arts. He often greeted me with the same salutation: “Rebekah, you’re still here,” he would say. He uttered this statement in English, with no inflection of surprise. The statement thinly veiled a question: “*Why* are you still here?” He and I shared an understanding that Bali cannot survive its current rate of development and immigration, and the Balinese cannot afford to continue to lose jobs to foreigners. So why was I still there? His statement reminded me that I am now and always will be foreign; yet my race permits me more power, money, and living space than most Balinese will ever know. Berger writes that in a phenomenological approach to fieldwork, the “ethnographer places her/himself on the same plane as the research participant, thus forwarding the dialogic agenda of the new ethnography” (2008, Loc. 1257). That may well be the ideal; but we are not the only ones engaged in defining who we are or want to be. Who I am in the field is shaped by how I am viewed, based as much on the sociopolitical histories of nations as on personal relationships and professional contributions.

Relations between “locals” and “others” were often a source of personal distress; they revealed uneven access to resources even within the live music scene that I found to be unacceptable. In 2012, while I was working as Production Manager for the BaliSpirit Festival, I invited a roots/folk band from the American West Coast, Medicine for the People, to perform on the festival’s main stage. The band’s frontman, Nahko Bear, is a young man of Apache and Mohawk heritage and a staunch activist for indigenous rights. Nahko remained on the island for more than two months, during which time he recorded at Antida and occasionally played intimate gigs for Balinese audiences in Denpasar and Ubud. Primarily, however, he performed for tourist and expatriate audiences in venues off limits to Balinese. In an interview with me, Nahko said he was both amused and disturbed by the almost total disassociation of Balinese and Indonesians from expatriate communities, as well as by the hedonism he observed among the largely liminal (and mostly European) latter group. During nearly every performance, Medicine for the People included the song “Vultures of Culture” on their set list, a song of vehement protest about European subjugation of American Indians. “It all starts to make sense,” go the lyrics. “They’re vultures of culture and they’re picking on all my friends.” To Nahko, the song resonated with new irony in the Balinese context. “There are many vultures here, too, he said” (interview, 2012).

While an underlying segregation of expatriate/tourist and local venues and audiences may have been commonplace, I assumed that when it came to academic settings, my colleagues in Balinese studies would welcome “locals” to share their perspective on history, culture, or politics. I was proven wrong when, in 2012, I presented at the International Institute for Asia Studies conference Bali in Global Asia, held at

Udayana University in Denpasar. I was invited to present with a panel on *komunitas*, or grassroots community organizations in Bali. My co-panelists were non-academics: Vifick Bolang is a Javanese photographer and founding member of Semut Ireng, a photography collective that teaches elementary school children the rudiments of film photography and how to make pinhole cameras from found objects. Gede Putra is a Balinese social activist and grandnephew of one of the murdered Balinese patriarchs commemorated by Taman 65. Rudolf Dethu served as the panel's discussant. Emma Baulch, the only other academic represented in our lineup, organized the panel. In addition to highlighting the various urban grassroots collectives we represented, Baulch hoped the panel would challenge the routine exclusion of "community members" from academic conferences, as well as demonstrate the valuable theoretical insight such non-academics contribute toward understanding Bali's diverse cultures.

In our preparations for the conference we excitedly discussed this rich opportunity to bridge the gap separating worlds of knowledge production and to infiltrate the domain of academic discourse with the fresh prose of "non-initiates." On the date of our scheduled presentations, our idealistic imaginings of breaching the ivory tower were flattened by the remarkably poor attendance of academics at our panel session. There were no more than thirty people in the room, and only two held university faculty positions. The rest of the audience consisted of close acquaintances to us all—friends, family members, fellow activists, and Denpasar residents with whom we frequently interacted and worked. Their attendance was appreciated and acknowledged by the panel; but lacking a significant academic audience, Baulch's primary objective fell short. It was,

however, a step in a positive direction toward equity in knowledge production, and one applauded in retrospect by several professors who apologized for their absence.

Lockard has argued that in the Indonesian context, “music can be a unifying force or play a role in creating a sense of community” (1996, 25). From a phenomenological perspective, it is not music as object, but rather individuals making music together that leads them to find common ground for creative and professional collaborations and a social closeness that create the texts of expressive culture, engender comfort, pleasure, and vocational gains for practitioners. The social interaction of music-making imbues music with its perceived power to build community. The difference in perspectives is an important one, because it also opens up the possibility that, in some cases, music may not be important at all. Furthermore, whenever individuals bind together through music-related practices, they are also distancing themselves from others.

Conclusion

You could say music is our religion . . . in it there is philosophy, ethics and rituals. Our money and time is spent on music. Your religion is where you spend most of your time. It's all about rock n' roll! (Navicula)⁴⁵

A scene's sustainability depends upon a shared commitment among core scene leaders to find common musical and ideological ground. By the accumulating experience of making music together, individual stances evolve into quasi-texts—subjectivities valued within the scene as central to its ideals of individual style, activism, creativity,

⁴⁵ “Bisa dibilang musik adalah agama kita...di dalamnya ada filosofi, etika dan ritualnya, waktu dan uang kita habis di music. Agamamu adalah dimana uang dan waktumu lebih banyak kau gunakan. It's all about rock n' roll!” This quotation appears on Navicula's official band website and in their professional media kit.

and critical thinking. Thus, the bad boy (Jerinx), eco-activist (Robi), performance artist (Made Bayak), the troubadour (Dadang), or provocateur (Dethu) are not disingenuous, stylistic tropes. These subjectivities are the threads that bind together an otherwise disparate group of people around a mélange of musical styles, idealistic preoccupations, and professional aspirations.

The *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984) of indie music is set apart from all others by its demographic heterogeneity: Its performers and fans include natives and newcomers to Denpasar from other regions of Bali, Java, Sumatra, Flores, and Papua; as well as a few expatriates from Australia, Europe, and the United States. Lacking a religious function, it is open to participants, regardless of religious affiliation. This has not led it to surpass other styles of music in popularity, however, nor has it overcome challenges like financial instability, genre prejudices, and racial segregation. For those who opt into and cultivate the indie music scene, however, it can be an ideal space for theorizing the liminality of the potentially alienating urban experience—of living apart from the familiar context of a home village or hometown and encountering the collision of languages, religions, and ideals in a heterogeneous environment. Straw observes on heavy metal and dance music communities, “particular musical practices ‘work’ to produce a sense of community within the conditions of metropolitan music scenes” (1991, 373). If social and environmental backgrounds are not wholly shared among participants, then music can be an important means to achieve common ground. Shared musical values are resources for affirming friendships. In fact, for some consultants, the indie soundworld provides the primary context in which they felt accompanied. Music practice nurtured community stability, much as Balinese Hindu ritual would, in other

contexts. For some, music has even replaced participation in religious ritual altogether (Robi, interview, 2010).

Chapter 6: “Bersama Kita” (Together with Us)¹: Making Music and Coming Home

From Bali to Borneo

On a cloudless June morning in 2009, I waited impatiently by the entryway to the domestic departure gates at Ngurah Rai Airport. Any minute, the band would pull up to the curb in a separate cab, and we would be on our way to Jakarta, our first stop in a nearly three-week tour of Java, from Bandung to Surabaya. Fingers nervously fiddling the strap of my backpack, I tried to imagine what would unfold over the next three weeks of near-nightly gigs across five cities and thousands of kilometers traversed by plane, train, ferry, and van. On this, Navicula’s longest and most gig-packed tour in their fourteen-year history, we would begin in Jakarta and then set off for Bandung, West Java; cross back through the capital before a cross-island train ride to Jogja, Central Java. From Jogja, on to East Java and Malang, finishing in Surabaya before hopping on a trans-island commuter bus bound for Denpasar.

The band tour, it turns out, is no romantic spiritual pilgrimage: Moments of pure bliss—in concert, when the band is tight, sound is spot on, and crowd is begging for more—are more spare than nights of late-running shows, disgruntled fans, busted amps and stolen mics, and insufficient funds to support the journey. The manager is constantly on the phone, calling to confirm gigs or rider compliance or press coverage. The road crew is, at seemingly all hours, either loading or unloading equipment. And the band members are readying their bodies

¹ Song by Nosstress, *Perspektif Bodoh* (2011).

and minds for the next gig—guitarists finger their axes, drummers turn any hard, flat surface into a kit, and vocalists warm and lubricate their instruments by humming tunes drawn from the tour's set list. It is exhausting work, yet work that requires an intimacy and mutual commitment unmatched in any other domain.

During the summer of 2009, we slept on floors, in the homes of fans and friends—or worse, crammed together on public transport and crossing great distances at breakneck speeds in the dark. We weathered illnesses and arguments, stolen equipment and wrong turns. The band tour is an exercise in cultivating patience and tolerating discomfort. But it is also an unmatched chance to savor the intense bonding forged through the shared trials and tribulations of the road. It is a time of high celebration and veneration for the gods of rock. It is then, very much, a spiritual journey.

Three years later, I waited in a dimly lit, vacant parking lot outside a newly erected four-star hotel on the outskirts of Pangkalanbun. It was well past midnight, and they should have arrived hours ago. But missteps and unforeseen obstacles held them up. A motorbike accident and broken down van, not to mention a standoff between angry villagers protecting the forests and police protecting the employees of a palm oil company, were excusable causes for their delay. Minutes later, they materialized from the dark highway. An entourage of more than forty—two vans and pick-up trucks adorned with flapping flags and banners, suggestive of their mission, were flanked by seven motorbikes donning tiger stripes and mounted by riders in matching jumpsuits. In circus-like flare, they pulled up to the curb on which I waited. Here they were in all their glory:

The Kepak Sayap Enggang (Flapping Wings of the Hornbill) Tour—a collective composed of members of the Greenpeace Indonesia deforestation action team, Mata Harimau (Eye of the Tiger); Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI), Indonesian Alliance for Indigenous Peoples (AMAN) and the rock-steady and road-worn Navicula.

I immediately handed over the items the band had requested I bring from Bali: a bottle of Gentleman Jack whiskey, guitar strings, and their limited edition CD, From Bali, For Borneo, produced exclusively for distribution during this most unusual of tours. My own route to Kalimantan had been straightforward: I landed in Pangkalanbun just five hours after departing Bali, with only a short flight transit in Surabaya in between. Navicula, however, arrived in Palangkaraya after a two-day journey from Canada, where they toured Quebec City and Toronto.

Over twelve days and 2,000 kilometers, Navicula toured Kalimantan, from Palangkaraya to Pontianak. Yet they rarely plugged in their amps or took to a stage. Instead, they took turns donning the tiger-striped jumpsuits and mounting Mata Harimau's (Eye of the Tiger) motorbikes, serving as eye-witnesses to the ubiquitously wasted expanse of Central and West Kalimantan. I pulled my weight by documenting the tour for future news and magazine publications. Each day, we drove up to 200 kilometers, making multiple stops at roadside bengkel (repair shops) to address flat tires, broken axles, and threadbare breaks—the consequences of the rough terrain we traversed. Each night, we found respite in a Dayak village and met with its residents to learn about their struggles with

encroaching big businesses intent on leveling the remaining trees. Following a formal welcome ritual—featuring traditional music, dance, and libations in the form of a locally favorite tuak or arak (palm or rice liquor)—we would gather in community halls and listen to heated testimonials from the villages’ bitter elders and impassioned youth: “Indonesia is a free country! But where is our freedom? We are imprisoned in our village, surrounded by companies who take away our freedom with the forests.” “We are Dayak. Our identity is synonymous with the forests. When the forests are gone, so are we.” “The government only shuts its eyes and opens its pockets.” Such were the comments engrained forever in our memories of the Dayak of Kalimantan’s interior.

Two weeks later, I greeted the band before they took the stage at the Rolling Stone Headquarters in Jakarta. This would mark the grand finale of their Kalimantan tour, a concert titled “Orangutan For Sound” and benefitting the orangutan rescue efforts of the Centre for Orangutan Protection (COP). I tried to absorb the high spirits of friends in the audience and enjoy the show, as I had countless other appearances by Navicula. But my mind was distracted and wandered back to that first tour in 2009. In Indonesia’s megacity—the overpopulated bedlam Navicula dubbed in one memorable track “Metropolutan” (Metro-pollutant)—I was preoccupied with nostalgia for a group of musicians I have known for so long and so well. So much has changed. They are now one of the nation’s most respected rock bands and well on their way to international stardom. Over the next four months their tour schedule will include Australia, the United States, and many trips back to Jakarta. They will produce a video

documentary of their tour with Greenpeace, as well as a compilation album titled Kami No Mori—a Japanese expression that translates to “The Forest of the Gods.”

Tonight, I leave the party early, exhausted from more than two weeks on the road. I exchange hugs and kiss cheeks and tell the boys I will see them back in Bali. Though I won’t be there, I know their final gig in Jakarta will proceed like all other tour wraps: They’ll cut loose, return to the glory of a little rock excess and drink and celebrate until dawn. Someone may wind up dancing on a tabletop. Another may wretch in the alleyway behind the venue. I pray their night of debauchery won’t include a miscalculated stage dive and head stitches this time. Navicula will return to Bali grateful and exhausted, and overwhelmed with the sense of intimacy only marriage—or a band tour—can create.

Collective Redress in Post-bomb Bali

This project began with a simple premise: The 2002 bombings, a major event in Bali’s history that temporarily devastated the local, tourism-dependent economy, opened a gap in the local entertainment industry for Balinese bands to enter. The bombings were not the first instance of devastating violence in Bali, nor did they have lasting impact on touristic prosperity. Symbolically, however, many of the individuals who took part in this project remembered the bombings as a turning point for the local music industry and their careers. In their aftermath, bands like Superman is Dead, Navicula, and The Hydrant gained major record label contracts and helped to set into motion the coalescence of a

previously dispersed underground music scene into a thriving network of local talent with ambition for national and international notoriety.

Seen through a phenomenologist's lens, the bombings may be understood in their historical and cultural specificity as a social drama (Turner 1982) that is individually and variously interpreted, with wide-ranging impacts that are only reflexively understood through the culling of memory. A phenomenological analysis does not undermine the impact on collective consciousness, attitudes shared across a large group of people, or the possibility that an unprecedented event will require new, collective action. As Blumer writes, "In the face of radically different and stressful situations people may be led to develop new forms of joint action that are markedly different from those in which they have previously engaged, yet even in such cases there is always some connection and continuity with what went on before" (1993 [1969], 20). Among the music professionals who took part in this study, the bombings were experienced as traumatic and game changing. By examining both individual memories and responsive joint actions one comes to appreciate the multifarious ways that human beings make sense of a seemingly senseless act—both as individual acting agents and members of a society they take to be meaningful. Joint actions do not result in conflict resolution, for there is no turning back the clocks and resetting collective consciousness to pre-bomb Bali. But it is possible for individuals to shift their perspectives on the bombings' significance and repercussions, as well as for interest to dissipate: Individuals working together within a society may foreground other concerns in order to prioritize future actions and achieve future goals.

No social drama is without precedence, nor can it be apprehended without social interaction. In recollection, the many musicians I came to know during this project shared

a tendency to objectify the bombings as a catalyst for the unveiling of both specifically “redressive” actions such as post-bomb benefit concerts and responsive songwriting as well as vocational opportunities like new options to perform publicly, and increased record label and media attention for local artists. In post-bomb Bali, many bands took up these new opportunities to make new music and make it available to a wider public than they had ever imagined would be possible before.

The specific timeframe for this study was selected based on the grave importance many musicians placed on how the first bombings impacted Bali, economically, psychologically, and socially. Thus it is irrelevant whether the bombings only accelerated a process of professionalization already underway: Although bands Superman Is Dead and Navicula were already performing and even recording their music before the bombings, in recollection, most research participants agreed that in this pre-bomb period, “music in Bali wasn’t really booming” (Dethu, interview, 2009).² In memory, such individuals point to the bombings as a turning point, music-making as an important means to process what happened and to heal, and the local music scene’s professionalization as a consequence. Attention to the collective wellbeing of the local was not an isolated response to a single event, however: In my observations throughout the last six years, musicians repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to home: Cultivating a local music scene, referencing home in music-making and engaging in activism to overcome social and environmental injustice demonstrated a deep commitment to joint protective action and a shared idealization of Bali.

² “Musik di Bali itu belum terlalu, belum terlalu *booming* ya.”

Idealizing the Local

In his book on DIY style in Indonesia, Luvaas observed that the term *lokal*, derived from English, was often used by “indie kids” (*anak indie*). He writes, “The ‘local’ circulating through indie scene discourse describes a relationship with the global, rather than a region, nation, colonial state, or even indigenous cultural tradition” (2012, Loc. 3451). While I cannot speak to the accuracy of this claim in the contexts Luvaas observed, I found that in Bali, what “local” constituted varied, depending upon the speaker and context, but rarely was it antipodal to a far-off global reality. In the indie scene, the local more often contrasted with a locally present “foreign” (*asing*), a vivid present within Bali. Consumer goods or crafts might be described as local or foreign, as often were people. Foreigners (*orang asing*) referred to domestic newcomers (*pendatang*), and domestic and foreign tourists (*turis*). Race, too, was a frequent—and often frustrating, for me—means that individuals distinguished the local from the foreign. The term *bule*, which translates literally to “albino,” was a popular catch-all to describe any white person visiting or living in Bali, regardless of her specific heritage or nationality. It was not uncommon for acquaintances and even close friends to refer to me directly as *bule*. As I described in Chapter 5, this was one means of distancing me within the indie scene, by drawing attention to my foreign ethnicity. In my experience, my skin color, more than any other aspect of my identity, as I presented myself to others—more than my education, occupation, hobbies, personality, or dress—was *the* point of reference by which people distinguished me from others. My foreignness did not exclude me from participating in the indie scene, however, nor was ethnicity ever a factor for exclusion for

others: The social world of indie music was set apart from others in Bali by its demographic heterogeneity: Its performers and fans include natives and newcomers to southern Bali from Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, Flores, and Papua. Expatriates, too, were warmly welcome, should they opt to play a part. Lacking a religious function, indie music was open to participants, regardless of religious affiliation. Though, as suggested above, class relations did prevail.

Where it referenced music—and how this scene and my analysis differ from Luvaas—is that, although a local/foreign distinction was occasionally used to refer to performing artists’ geographic roots, it was never employed to describe a genre’s geographic origins. Thus, rock music was never described as *musik asing* (foreign music) or *musik Barat* (Western music), yet individuals like Igo and Dethu may encourage support for “local” rock bands (*band lokal*) by buying original print CDs, rather than engaging in illegal downloading. Representing the local through symbolic gestures, texts, and dress was also important to individual musicians as they gained access to audiences beyond Bali. Thus, in contrast Luvaas’s claim that indie pop artists in Bandung and Jakarta saw “the symbolic indicators of place as tainting their authenticity” (2012, Loc. 3499), symbols of Bali were abundant within the indie scene, and in my experience, only increased as the scene—and its leaders—matured.

Discursively within music, references to the local appeared frequently in both song lyrics and song titles: Superman Is Dead’s “Kuta Rock City” (2003) Nosstress’s “Hiruk Pikuk Denpasar” (The Bustle of Denpasar, 2011) and Navicula’s “Ubud” (2005) are clear examples because these three songs reference specific places in Bali. More subtle, but just as steadfastly focused on the local were songs like The Hydrant’s “Brothel

in Paradise” (2009), an homage to a prostitute (Bali supports a thriving prostitution industry, particularly in southern Bali) or Nosstress’s “Ini Judulnya Belakangan,” (This is the Later Title, 2014) in which the three singers say farewell to Bali to visit Jogjakarta and lament an island that is increasingly unrecognizable, thanks to increasing traffic, high rise hotels, and street billboards. Navicula’s “Kill the Fireflies” (2009) refers to the decimation of firefly population by pesticides used in the rice fields. Robi Navicula’s solo EP features a song titled “Sekisah Cangkir Kopi” (A Story of a Cup of Coffee, 2014), which celebrates Bali’s coffee agriculture and the singer’s own farming roots in Tabanan. While these represent only a small selection and recording artists wrote songs on a wide variety of topics, they do demonstrate that throughout the 2000s, many of the most successful and respected musicians were addressing the local in songwriting.

The local was also symbolized visually through stage costumes, album art, and music video: Music videos for Dialog Dini Hari’s “Aku Dimana” (2010), directed and produced by Bimo Dwipoalam, as well as Nosstress’s “Bersama Kita” (2011) Esha Satria and Guna Warma each feature footage of Denpasar’s city streets. Erick Est, who was the island’s most popular music video producer at this time, captured local landscapes in clips for bands Superman Is Dead and The Hydrant: For The Hydrant’s 2009 title track release “Bali Bandidos,” Erick selected archival footage of the iconic Balinese pastime, cock fighting. As mentioned in Chapter 5, in 2014, Eric released a feature-length documentary on traditional kiting (*layang layang*), titled *Janggan*. For the film’s soundtrack, Erick selected traditional Balinese music such as the processional *beleganjur* and Balinese vocal repertoire, *kekawin*, as well as well-known children’s songs about kiting, recorded by Balinese rock bands Ganjil, The Djihard, Scared of

Bums, and Mr. Botax. For the music videos created to promote the film, Erick shot each band performing on a well-known local fishing beach in Sanur. The musicians dressed in *kamben*, a cloth worn around the waist, and *udeng*, a man's head wrap, each sporting the sacred colors of the *tridatu*, red, white, and black. Rock music, Erick claimed, enabled him to symbolically portray *layang layang* as a living tradition, as did mixing iconic symbols of Balinese tradition with those of Balinese cosmopolitanism, such as a t-shirt emblazoned with the slogan "I Love Bali," popularly sold in southern Bali in tourist markets, worn by The Djihard vocalist Roy (interview, 2014).

Artists often boasted their Balinese roots in casual conversations and media interviews, and when abroad and out of the local context, their references to the local often took on grand display. The Hydrant and SID each donned traditional Balinese regalia (*pakaian adat*) when performing internationally, as did Robi in his solo performance in Jakarta for President Joko Widodo's inauguration. In 2013 Navicula took a slightly different approach to wearing their local pride on their chests by printing t-shirts bearing the audacious invitation, "Fuck me. I'm from Bali." The bandmates wore them while on tour in the United States.

All of these examples demonstrate the strong sense of selfhood as attached to a geographic place and a sense of obligation to home that would be undermined if one were to dismiss this music as resistance to a parent culture. In his 2008 study on popular music in Indonesia, Wallach dismisses underground music as merely derivative of Western styles and showing no promise of being truly assimilated. Baulch (2007) celebrates these musics as incredibly important within the local context, but ignores the ways in which the musical practices themselves generated very specific meanings for the participants that

do not intentionally speak out against a broader national context. Both Wallach and Baulch prioritized musical origins in their analysis, without any indication of whether or not that had been a preoccupation for the people with whom they spoke about music. While Luvaas corrects this oversight by claiming such preoccupations among indie kids in Java, he also assumes a resistance to the inherited local that I did not experience as a modern reality in Bali. Firstly, it is important to note that I was not working with teenagers. Most of the people who participated in this study were my coevals, and many were married and had children. A subcultural model for resistance to a parent culture, a *la* Hebdige (1979), seems an ill fit to describe individuals who were already parents.

Secondly, I argue that the fervent dedication to practicing these styles of music demonstrates that they have been fully assimilated. The Other was not the parent culture and the foreign is not far away, though resistance to power certainly did occur. It was not a resistance to all Balinese, however, but to Balinese with a narrow definition of cultural heritage. It was not a rejection of Jakarta's hegemony (Baulch 2007), but to Jakartan investors who are changing the social, economic, and even environmental landscape of Bali. It was not a rejection of politicians, but a rejection of corrupt ones. Finally, it was not a rejection of the parent generation, but a rejection of ideas that become excuses for injustice or an acceptance of the status quo.

With regards to musical style, personal attachments shrunk the geographical distance between themselves and many (though not all) of their artistic icons, be they Kurt Cobain, Jimi Hendrix, or Zack De La Rocha, and collective ideologies on local pride and activism challenge other studies that continue to be preoccupied with the roots—or routes—of globally circulated expressive cultures like rock music. No mere

devotees of the bands they admired as teenagers and young adults—as Luvaas has claimed (2012)—they also considered themselves to be trailblazers for rock, punk, metal, or folk music in Indonesia. The shift from circumspect imitators to proud trailblazers happened slowly, over the course of a band’s career, but writing original music was an important starting point. While playing covers of Social Distortion or Nirvana, for example, the foreignness of the music and a lack of ownership over it was palpable in how these artists described their early music experiences. When they began writing their own songs, however, with original chord progressions and lyrics, the foreignness of the genres dissipated—even if the songs still displayed clear references to the same artists. This should come as no surprise to anyone who has experienced forming a band as an adolescent or teenager and playing covers by one’s favorite artists. One would not presume to claim “Jeremy” by Pearl Jam as one’s own music, because it was clearly written by another band and would be experienced in that way by both the performers and any other observer. But if that same band takes the basic building blocks of grunge music—the instrumentation, simple chord progressions, unpolished and gravelly vocal delivery, and heavy guitar distortion—and applies them to new songs with “original” lyrics (though they may show strong influence from the lyrical content of other grunge bands), and “original” chord progressions (though they may closely imitate existing songs), then the songs can rightfully be claimed as the band’s own.

In addition to celebrating iconic images of the local, indie musicians have also added new colors to the palette: Superman Is Dead consciously cultivated the iconic tattooed “bad boy” rebel, commanding the streets of Bali on the back of vintage motorcycles. At first glance, this tattooed rebel—emulated by tens of thousands of

Balinese teenagers over the last nearly two decades—may seem to reject local heritage (*warisan budaya*) and conform to the “outsider” or “bohemian” type described by Luvaas, which he suggests were brought into vogue through public figures like poet Chairul Anwar (2012, Loc. 2435). As Chapter 4 demonstrated, however, SID’s bad boy persona was a strategic means for them to cultivate a signature style as professional performing and recording artists. Furthermore, as Jerinx often described in casual conversations, the band wanted to offer young fans the bad boy subjectivity, not as a better option for being Balinese, but rather, just one possibility among many. Furthermore, it was a subjectivity reserved for music performance and fashion, and not carried into other inappropriate contexts. In another setting—a *banjar* meeting wedding (*pernikahan*), for example—I found Jerinx and his bandmates exhibiting entirely different demeanors. They humbly and respectfully greeted their elders, dressed in full *pakaian adat*, and displayed due reverence for the occasion.

Luvaas, borrowing from George Lipsitz (1994) claims that indie artists in Bandung and Jakarta practiced a “strategic anti-essentialism,” by “intentionally complicating, ignoring, or avoiding inherited identity types” (2012, Loc. 3416). While rock musicians like SID have intentionally broadened the stylistic possibilities in music, fashion, and body art for what constitutes Balinese identity, they have sacrificed other identity types as a result. In fact, where appropriate, they don these inherited subjectivities, as well. Furthermore, how one interacts with such inherited subjectivities will vary greatly. Robi, for example, often said that he does not feel a strong attachment to many Hindu Balinese customs, nor does he feel a strong obligation to contribute to his *banjar*. These activities are not an important means for him to display his Balineseness.

Historically, however, such stylistic experiments have led to tension between social groups within Bali. According to both Dethu and Jerinx, even as late as the late 1990s, tattooed teenagers were stereotyped as *preman* (criminals) and occasionally ostracized by their communities. This was true throughout much of Indonesia during the New Order. In fact during the 1980s, President Soeharto ordered the disappearance of young men in Jakarta who donned tattoos as a form of crime prevention (See Baulch 2007, 20). It took many years and a carefully crafted public relations campaign on the part of SID, the band's managers, and their label to render this new image of a Balinese man as acceptable and desirable, both at home and abroad.

My observations within Bali's indie scene contradict Luvaas's assessment of indie music in Jakarta and Bandung as an act of deterritorialization. The musicians and other music professionals with whom I engaged were vehemently territorial, and the territory with which they identified was geographically and culturally Bali. To reduce a music scene preoccupied with musicians and musical styles that may have originated "elsewhere" (Baulch 2007) as a rejection of the local overlooks the specific historical trajectories for these musics and their active popularization by individual acting agents.

SID had a specific motivation for cultivating their bad boy style: They wanted to distinguish themselves from other bands in order to succeed as professional musicians. Dethu, Igo, and Jerinx each independently argued that in order for a band to succeed, it must find its unique and strong character so that it can stand out from other existing bands. In Jerinx's words, "They must prioritize their character, and their character must be strong and distinct, easy to distinguish from other bands. They can't be the same with another million. They have to stand up. If they're already standing up, then the

management can work for their benefit. But even if the band management is good, if the band doesn't have a strong character, the management can't help to support them" (Jerinx, interview, 2009).³ It is easy to observe over SID's career how the careful combination of strategies to communicate a unique character—from fashion to performance style to socializing behaviors and media interactions—can engender career success. Yet other bands have been just as proactive about cultivating their image and disseminating their music, without the same impact. I asked Dethu over email why Navicula's fanbase was always so much smaller than Superman Is Dead's and what he thought was the key to Superman Is Dead's winning formula. He replied:

“1. Bad boys image: At the time when SID first began to attract public attention there was a gap for bad boys in the Indonesian music industry. The kids didn't feel very connected to Slank anymore. They were already considered a bit too old, stale, and mainstream. When SID came, they came with this beer-drinker persona (so rebellious for Indo/outside-of-Bali standards), glam-punk fashion (The Clash meets California party-till-you-puke punk rock), they were from Bali (mysterious, exotic, wild and free!), and better looking than Slank (Slank were already in their late 30s, while were SID still in their 20s). Kids went berserk when SID showed up in the scene because they were so different (compared to other big Jakarta bands like Sheila On 7, Padi—those normal-looking pop rockers).

2. Attitude: I'm not trying to claim this part. But when I wrote bios, newsletters, or stories, to many mailing lists, I always wrote about how sloppy they were at playing their instruments (the badass Balinese unschooled band men, or something like that). I used to manage this very popular Yahoo! Groups mailing list, SuicideGlamNation, which included many influential alternative scenesters like Wendi Putranto, Deathrockstar's founders, etc. That really helped us to reach Jakartan crowds. SID showed people [like this] that they didn't care too much about musical skills at all. This is punk rock, egalitarian, everyone can do it. That made the kids feel very connected to SID. No barriers. Very punk rock. It's the message, the hair gel, the red shirts, the boots...not really about the music. That's why in their bio when I mention the members of the band I did it this way:

- Bobby Kool - beer drinker, vocal, guitar

³ “Mereka salah satu harus punya karakter yang paling utama, karakter harus kuat, tidak sama, yang tidak terlalu apa ya, band ini harus gampang di bedakan dengan band yang lain. Mereka itu tidak sama *another one million* mereka harus *stand up* yang utama, kalau bandnya sudah stand up manajemen yang bagus *does it*. Udah manajemen bagus bandnya nggak punya karakter pasti saling mendukung.”

- Eka Rock - beer drinker, bass, backing vocal
- Jerinx - beer drinker, drums, backing vocal

I put beer drinker first to tell the world that beer comes first; it's more important than the music. I also put in their technical riders that the event organizer had to provide a crate of big bottles of Bir Bintang [Bintang beer] for every show. This small thing (for Bali standards) turned out to create strong buzz. One magazine even discussed the beer factor and asked some big celebs what they thought about SID's habit to bring beer on stage. What the fuck? Haha. These religious, normal pop-rockers, made such a huge deal about this beer drinking habit. Also, it turned out that nobody ever asked for beers in their technical riders before us. So we were the very first hahahaha... Since then, I dramatized a bit about SID's beer drinking habits. I put this beer factor on everything I wrote about SID. And it worked. Really, really well.

3. Green Day: At the time, Green Day was huge. SID was like the Indonesian version of Green Day.

4. Easy listening plus Angst Factor: 3-chords and direct messages. See last part of the lyrics from "Punk Hari Ini", the single that helped them reaching superstars status:

MTV today, Rock n' Roll is dead
Sing the songs of others and you will be famous
Try what's not suspicious, I cannot resist
Full of tattoos, piercings too, sing crybaby lullabies⁴

So direct, easy to swallow, and at the same time, angry...

While with Navicula, I guess the kids found them a bit too serious. At the time that they were singing about environmental problems, that wasn't cool yet. Plus, they weren't as good-looking as SID. Back then, only Robi looked handsome. The rest, not really, not yet. Dankie⁵ wasn't really in his form yet, in terms of fashion. Jakarta crowds, the typical arrogant big city kids, weren't too welcoming with Navicula because, I think they were still considered a bit too provincial. Boys from a small town who tried their luck in the capital city. Navicula weren't cool enough. But Navicula are still lucky because quite a few serious music critics and musicians still supported them due to their strong material and excellent musical skills. So they didn't just disappeared after the album debut with Sony failed... Again, it's their strong material and awesome musical skills that help them surviving in the showbiz."

⁴ MTV hari ini, Rock n' Roll telah mati
Nyanyikan lagu orang lain dan kau akan terkenal
Coba tuk tak curiga, tak kuasa ku menahan
Penuh tattoo, juga piercing, nyanyikan lagu cengeng

⁵Dadang, the band's guitarist.

Dethu's reply reveals a lot about what he believed to a band's reception: Firstly, in concurrence with Jerinx, Dethu believed that a carefully cultivated style or "image" as a band was essential to widespread success. In some cases, it is more important than musical ability. SID's carefully cultivated bad boy image shocked not only Balinese audiences, but also the conservative, Muslim-dominant recording industry in Indonesia and gained them a following of young boys who needed an outlet for their own teenage angst without acting out dramatically themselves. Secondly, a band must ride that fine line between introducing something original and keeping with the musical climate of their times. SID rose to fame when punk style was very popular in Indonesia and many young kids shared the fantasy spread around the world that anyone could play punk songs. They enjoyed the fashion and simplicity of the genre, and SID was able to deliver that at the height of its popularity.

Luckily for SID, their popularity has outlasted punk's shelf life in Indonesia. Thirdly, unfortunately, all performers are judged unfairly according to elitist criteria like good looks and a hip, urban attitude. SID fit the bill for audiences in Jakarta, while Navicula—at least in the early 2000s, fell short. Robi mentioned on several occasions that the band's idealism, in terms of both their musicality and stylistic experimentation as well as the politically charged nature of their lyrics prevents them from cultivating a large following on a national scale. He said that Navicula's fanbase tends to be more discerning and educated about "good" music and social and environmental issues than the fanbase for other more popular bands (interview, 2010). I outline Dethu's comment in its entirety because it helps to reveal both how scene leaders defined band talent (and often not only in terms of their musicality) as well as the divergent pathways (Finnegan 1989)

of Bali's most successful rock bands. SID continued to earn respect for their massive crowd appeal and distinct character. Navicula continue to earn respect for their exceptional collective musicianship and uncompromising dedication to environmental conservation. While Superman Is Dead is best known as Kuta's bad boys, they have also been quite consistent in delivering social and environmental messages, both on the stage and via social media. In fact, over the last year, Jerinx has been the "loudest" proponent for anti-reclamation movement, both onstage and via social media.

Berger and Luckmann write, "Intersubjective sedimentation also takes place when several individuals share a common biography, experiences of which become incorporated in a common stock of knowledge. Intersubjective sedimentation can be called truly social only when it has been objectivated in a sign system of one kind or another, that is, when the possibility of reiterated objectification of the shared experiences arises" (1966, 67). As subjective meanings become "objective facticities" (ibid., 17), stances on the importance of style (Berger 2009) to career success became a taken-for-granted fact for musicians that would follow and seek the same professional accolades. Individual scene leaders, thus, were idealized for their career successes and helped to strengthen artistic commitment among their successors. When I first met Igo and Dethu in 2009, they both praised the accomplishments of bands like SID and Navicula, citing their ability to measure up to—and even surpass—national recording artists as a source of pride. Superman Is Dead, Dethu said, was the biggest rock band in Indonesia. The most "consistent" grunge band nationwide was Navicula. The first rockabilly and psychobilly acts in Indonesia were The Hydrant and Suicidal Sinatra. All of these bands originated in

Bali and rose to fame during a time period in which post-bomb financial hardship could have knocked the wind out of local creativity. The opposite, in fact, occurred.

Objectifying Music

The individuals at the center of this project form an easily identifiable network dedicated to the production of music in Bali. Yet their stylistic propensities are varied and difficult to assemble under any acceptable descriptor. I chose to call this scene an “indie” music scene because I often heard this term used by scene insiders. It was not a preferred descriptor by all, however. People like Dethu suggested that it had grown too commercial; even telecommunications and cigarette companies had begun using the term to describe artists they selected for their brand promotion tours (interview, 2010). In the Balinese context, “indie” also suggested a somewhat ill-fitting distinction between major labels and independent music producers, as SID’s professional success and steadfast creative independence on major label Sony demonstrates. Finally, on occasion, my use of indie was misunderstood to refer to the specific generic leanings of the indie pop acts popular in Jakarta and Bandung (See Luvaas 2012). As the least offensive alternative and a convenient shorthand for the rock, punk, grunge, metal, electronica, folk, rockabilly, psychobilly, and blues bands that made up this network of music producers, I opted to maintain my usage throughout the project.

Furthermore, I was not the only one who struggled with terminology: In the late 2000s, music critics and label owners in Jakarta also endeavored to define what they argued to be a reputable distinction between mainstream and non-mainstream artists. Aldo Sianturi, for example, former marketing manager for Universal Records Indonesia

and managing director for independent label Aksara Records, preferred not to use the label “indie” to describe the bands at the center of this study, but rather opted for adjectives to describe their commitment to “uncompromising” and “authentic” (*otentik*) music (interview, 2010). What defined the mainstream music industry, according to Aldo, was the end goal of making music: Rather than creating “uncompromising art,” he said, the end goal is fame: “In Indonesia, as for the music industry, I’d say there is no music industry here. There is a star industry. Everyone wants to be a star.”⁶ Aldo’s description is similar to sentiments expressed about the mainstream music industry in the United States and United Kingdom as well, particularly when indie ethics evolved out of punk DIY aesthetics in the 1980s and 90s (See Luvaas 2007 and Fonarow 2006). Yet as Chapter 4 demonstrated, there is very little stylistically that distinguishes so-called mainstream and nonmainstream artists.

Casting aside a single style as the reigning factor, this project has attempted to trace, through a study of practice (Berger 2009), the various impetuses that drew these individuals together. As an amateur or professional taking part in a variety of performance contexts, there was a consistent focal point for all activity—though it most assuredly did not elicit the same degree of focus at all times and for all participants—and that is *music*. Music was an objectified type of expressive culture, taken for granted by all participating actively in the indie music scene to be very important. Phenomenology and, more specifically, symbolic interaction, allows for an inquiry into meaning-generation through interaction among individuals. That interaction inevitably rests upon agreement

⁶ “Nah di Indonesia, *music industry* itu yang saya bilang ga ada *music industry* di sini. Yang ada, adalah industri bintang. Semua ingin jadi bintang.”

about the objects present in the world, and music is taken as an abstract object in the world, but an object nonetheless.

In order to explain the symbolic interactionist's stance on an "object," Blumer begins with a chair: There is nothing intrinsic about the object that leads one to interpret it as something one may sit upon. How did one come to know this object as a chair? How did one learn to sit upon it rather than, say, place another object on top of it? Though the individual agency granted by our own psychological processes allows us a great degree of experimentation, we ultimately know this object to be one for sitting because we have learned this function through our interaction with others: "The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing" (Blumer 1993, 4). Through social interaction, the object becomes a chair, and not a table.

The same model for understanding this collective production of knowledge can be applied to "abstract objects" like music, though the analytical process is more complex: A chair's meaning may, in most cases, be taken for granted because "the meaning emanates, so to speak, from the thing and as such there is no process involved in its formation..." (ibid.). An object like music, however, requires theorization in order to reach the evaluative consensus that becomes "institutionalized knowledge" (Berger and Luckmann 1966). This requires a "sovereign viewpoint;" a return to the perch for a bird's eye view in order to understand the logic of practice within any social group (ibid, 27). This has been the object of this study. It is by no means a disavowal of the research interlocutor's ability to interpret social phenomena. In fact, such interpretations, twice removed from the object itself, which require reflexive engagement with and then verbalization of the

meanings assigned to that object, are also important. A phenomenological study on music-related practices requires both a focused observation of interactions and inquiry into how the objects of this social world are reflexively assigned meaning in order to understand what is at stake. In other words, the object of the phenomenologist's inquiry—in the case of the chair or the music—may be pre-institutional, focusing not on ideological knowledge, but on practical knowledge. In fact, Bourdieu argues that phenomenology, applied within the social sciences, does not, in fact, seek to know the “native's” *point of view* on these objects (a reflexive engagement) but, rather, the native's *experience* of these objects (1984 [1979]). Yet symbolic interactionism provides the tools to explore how abstract objects come to bear ideological significance. The native point of view is of central importance in this study, where objects like music have been reflexively and painstakingly explored. To that end, I often asked questions directed at how music is valued. Why was the experience of music something that these individuals craved, to the point that many would even cast aside more stable and financially rewarding vocations in order to dedicate the majority of their days and nights to making it?

In a Balinese Hindu religious context, musicians help to facilitate a successful ritual—the goal of which is almost always to ensure the community's wellbeing—by pleasing the gods and ancestors with their playing. Feelings of excitement and euphoria (See Fonarow 2006) may occur—particularly during rituals when audience members are allowed to lose themselves in trance to facilitate contact between the seen (*sekala*) and unseen (*niskala*) worlds. Yet excitement and euphoria are not means to an end. The

primary goal of pleasing the gods and ancestors is almost always foregrounded, and therefore, audience attention may often wander away from the performance event.

Within the indie scene, however, excitement and euphoria were often the primary goals of live performance. The music was entertainment in the most consequential use of the term: Tracing the etymology of the verb “to entertain” to “*entretenir*,” Old French for “hold apart,” Turner argues that to entertain is to “create a liminal or liminoid space” (1982, 41)—a moment or moments set apart from mundane experience and transformative for participants. In Schutz’s terms, music constitutes a finite province of meaning, distinctive from the social interactions and experience of time that occurs in everyday life (1964 [1951]). When I asked consultants what is enjoyable about attending live band performance, responses varied tremendously. All respondents, however, mentioned at least in passing that they enjoyed the entire *suasana* or atmosphere of a concert experience. Listening to music should be fun and exciting, as Dizta Discotion Pill described: “I just think, as long as we make music, we’re just having fun, we play for fun, then people who hear [our music], have fun; it’s exciting, that’s all. That’s our job” (Dizta, interview, 2009).⁷

At a rock gig, one can escape temporarily from family or work obligations and drink and dance with friends and flirt with romantic interests. Of course, event socializing contributes to a sense of belonging, or *communitas*, in Turner’s terms (1984), that deepens participant commitment to the scene itself so that the experience can be repeated (Turner 1982). As Wallach describes, hanging out, or *nongkrong*, which I understand as a form of ritualized socializing, contributes an “ethic of sociality” (2008, 20). Yet the live

⁷ “Gue sih mikirnya selama kita buat musik, kita *fun* aja, kita mainin *fun*, terus orang yang denger *fun*, gue asik-asik aja. Itu urusan...”

music experience does more than provide opportunity for socializing: it provides opportunity for mutually tuning in—for losing oneself in that finite province of inner time as one slides into the deeply pleasurable experiences of excitement and euphoria. It is not surprising that research participants rarely described these experiences with words because it is difficult to reflect upon an experience in inner time. Euphoria in music experience is pre-theoretical, and attempts to describe it in the outer time of everyday life can never truly capture the *suasana* of passing inner time in the company of others. The feelings that emerge are lost once the temporal constraints of clock time require one to distance oneself from the immediacy of music enjoyment and define what it feels like. But it is there, and in the moment it is palpable.

The enjoyment that artists and their audiences experience through a live performance should not be underestimated for its capacity to strengthen their resolve to repeat that experience. It is what leads musicians to come to identify music as an essential part of living life fully. When I asked Dizta what music means to him, he said, “This is the important thing: I love music very much, more than anything [laughing]. I live my life for music twenty hours a day.” Gung Bagus, Discotion Pill’s drummer replied: “Yeah, music, it’s actually living, it’s like a model for the soul.”⁸ Bassist and backing vocalist Yudha said, “For me, without music, it’s the same as death. If there isn’t any music it’s like...like cooked rice without salt.”⁹ The tendency for musicians to compare music to something irreplaceable and a necessary part of everyday life carried through almost every interview.

⁸ “Musik itu sebenarnya adalah hidup sebagai kayak model jiwa ya.”

⁹ “Kalo aku tanpa musik, sama dengan mati. Jadi, kalo gak ada musik jadi kayak, kayak...apa ya...nasi tanpa garam.”

Robi claimed that music also serves as a release valve for pent up emotions or opinions that cannot be expressed elsewhere: Whatever problems one may face in daily life, one can address those through music. Robi argued that, in particular, hard music (*musik keras*) like rock or metal provides an opportunity to release aggression in an efficacious medium. He said, “In hard rock, there is often symbolism like a demon, and you have to release your own demon traits” (interview, 2009).¹⁰ He viewed music as a means to let go of aggression and return to a stable state: “So after they play that music and let out all of their anger, when they go back to their social life, they’re like peaceful guys, because all of their anger was released through music” (ibid.)¹¹

That experiencing music was fun, exciting, euphoric, and restorative were recurrent themes. But as Chapter 5 demonstrated, music was also valued for its ability to shape perspectives on important issues facing Balinese society. I asked Robi not only what music meant to him, what also what he hoped to accomplish by using music as a mode of activism. He responded: “Actually music, as a kind of art, is something that makes people feel they have ownership over something. It binds a person to that issue. On the one hand, people are tied to the products of art and they feel that it becomes part of themselves. But on the other, music can become their freedom” (Robi, interview, 2012).¹² I interpreted Robi’s words to mean that the affinity we feel for music and the pleasure we take from experiencing it binds us to the message within it. Ideally, this will coerce us into applying the lessons in contexts beyond the immediate music experience.

¹⁰ “Iya, karena musiknya keras, *imagery* nya kayak *demon*, kamu harus mengeluarkan karakter *demon* pada dirimu.”

¹¹ “So, setelah mereka main musik dan keluar semua marahnya, *when they back to the social, they will be like a peace guy*, karena sudah marahnya sudah lari ke situ.”

¹² “Musik sebenarnya... apa namanya... bagian dari seni ya. Sesuatu yang membuat orang merasa memiliki itu. Membuat suatu orang terikat terhadap itu. Apa namanya... jsekaligus memer...di satu sisi orang terikat pada produk seni apa namanya...dia merasa bahwa itu menjadi bagian dari dirinya. Tapi disatu sisi itu, musik juga bisa menjadi pembebas gitu.”

Robi also saw music as an important communicative medium that may be able to move audiences to action in ways that everyday communication cannot. This is why, he argued, that Navicula remained dedicated to communicating about the issues they have directly experienced as important:

I think that music is a really good entry point to be used as a medium to convey an ideology. A message. Music is a powerful thing. Throughout history, music has been used to spread messages, even religion. And it's an effective entry point into society. Here, we really love the music. Navicula, I mean. We love, we really love to play music. Under any circumstance or condition we believe that music is something that can bring us pleasure. Furthermore, because we also bring up issues or problems or thoughts that bother us, that we see within society or from our community—that we have experienced...well, we have experienced that, and now we want to share about it.” (ibid., 2010).¹³

Unlike artists like Dizta, who viewed his primary obligation to audiences as providing them with a fun experience, Robi—and many other music activists in Bali—saw music as a means to attract attention to a particular problem that collective commitment could help resolve. He said, “Because we as artists, we’re not just entertaining people, in my opinion. Perhaps for some artists, it’s just for entertainment, ya that’s ok. That’s your right to make something nice to be experienced. But for me personally, if you’ve got some potential, you have an ability to influence people. You have the ability to use your work to attract people’s interest...So for me personally, I

¹³ “Musik ini adalah suatu *entry point* yang bagus sekali kalo aku pikir untuk...untuk menggunakannya sebagai media, menyampaikan suatu ideologi. Suatu pesan. Musik adalah sesuatu yang *powerful*. Yang dari sejarah, banyak sekali termasuk penyebaran agama pun banyak memakai musik gitu. Dan itu efektif masuk ke masyarakat gitu. Disini, kita memang suka musik. Kalo Navicula sendiri. *We love*, kita memang suka mainkan musik gitu. Dalam situasi kondisi apapun juga kita menganggap musik adalah sesuatu yang menyenangkan kita gitu. Terus, karena kita juga memegang isu-isu atau masalah-masalah atau pikiran-pikiran yang mengusik kita, yang kita dapat dari sos, yang kita dapat dari sosial, yang kita dapat dari masyarakat, dan kita alami, *we experience that*, kita ingin *sharing it*.”

realize that music has a powerful influence on other people. I am aware that music is like a...useful...what would you call it? A really powerful weapon.” (interview, 2009).¹⁴

Changing Values, Shifting Subjectivities

In 2012, when I learned that Navicula won the Røde Rocks competition and would be traveling to Los Angeles to record at Record Plant with Alain Johannes, I wrote in my field journal, “Today I marvel at the collapse of time and space as this southern Bali band, which once astonished me with skillfully executed references to the North American West Coast and the likes of Hendrix and Cornell, will now trace the shadows of these rock gods on their home turf.” Robi said it was like being “copied and pasted” from Bali to LA: In a matter of a few short months they had managed to leapfrog any number of obstacles distancing a “local” Bali band from the global music industry axis (interview, 2012).

This project began with the assumption that a phenomenological study of practice would get closer to music’s meaning in people’s lives. It has also sought to argue that a preoccupation with the roots—and routes—of music’s texts undermines their valuing in practice. Navicula’s latest professional trajectories suggest that the opportunities for “peripheral” musicians to gain international respect are rerouting global cultural flows and dismissing the cultural imperialism debate. Navicula’s story rightly elicits praise for

¹⁴ “Karena kita sebagai seniman, kita bukan hanya memberi sesuatu, *we’re not just entertain people*. Kalo bagi saya. Kalo, mungkin bagi beberapa orang seniman, kalo untuk *entertain* aja ya ok. *That’s your rights* untuk membuat sesuatu yang enak aja dilihat. Tapi, menurut saya pribadi sih, kalo kamu punya sesuatu potensi, *you have a...ability untuk influence people. You have ability* untuk menggunakan karya-karyamu untuk menarik *interest* orang. Jadi, saya sendiri, saya sadar bahwa musik punya *power* yang besar ya untuk, untuk meng-*influence* orang. Saya sadar, *music is like a...useful...apa, or how you call it...weapon* yang sangat...sangat...ya, ampuh.”

the creative, collaborative work and visionary ethos that rocket-launched an off-the-radar band from Bali to LA. Yet the propensities of popular music disciplines may still reduce their work to (at best) symbolic resistance or (at worst) xenocentrism. To do so, however, is to lose the plot.

Berger and Luckmann write, “Institutions are embodied in individual experience by means of roles” (1966, 75). For Jerinx, Dethu, Igo, Robi, Anom, and the many other professionals willing to invite me into their socio-musical world and share their thoughts about music, Bali, and belonging, music-making was not only about craft. It was not only about creativity, talent, or charisma—though these aspects of their craft are certainly valued and cultivated. But making music together was also about home. Similarly, as stances evolved into quasi-texts, characteristics of individuals taken in isolation evolved into subjectivities praised within the scene: The bad boy (Jerinx), the eco-activist (Robi), the performance artist (Made Bayak), the troubadour (Dadang), the provocateur (Dethu) were all personas that were mutually idealized. But roles shift over time, and some individuals who were central to the scene in the late 2000s have slid into other roles.

Beginning in 2011, Igo shifted his attention toward visual art, and specifically the avant-garde painters from Sanur that he counted among his closest childhood and adulthood friends. He helped to establish the beachside Sands Gallery and together with his wife, opened his own café and art gallery in Sanur called Warung Yayaa, named after his daughter. In 2013, Igo took over management for Manshed, a new, hyper-masculine venue in Sanur established in a renovated auto repair garage. While Manshed could easily feature live music performance, Igo steered clear of organizing regular performance gigs, noting that he preferred to support Antida’s Soundgarden as the primary venue for live

music (interview, 2014). In November 2014, however, Igo made a comeback in the music scene when his popular, self-described “cosmic music” (short for cosmo-ethnic music) band Telephone returned to the rehearsal studio to prepare for upcoming live performances.

Dethu left Bali permanently in 2011 when he moved to China with his Australian wife, Sarah Forbes, for a job opportunity. The two settled in the suburbs of Sydney for nearly two years after that, before relocating to Jakarta, where they continue to live. The strategic location allows Dethu to organize concerts and other events with his close friends and collaborators at *Rolling Stone Indonesia*, as well as socialize regularly with Jakarta’s best bands and most respected music critics, including *Rolling Stone*’s Wendi Putranto and Adib Hidayat. He and Sarah, herself a naturalized citizen and environmental activist, continued to visit Bali regularly and both were fiercely dedicated to the anti-reclamation campaign at the end of 2014.

Although Navicula continued to perform regularly in Jakarta, they had no plans for another album release by the end of 2014 and were struggling with management turnover. Robi was focused on his side project, Ganjil, a duo formed with metal drummer BJ. He had also released a solo EP in late 2014 under his birth name Gede Robi, for which he took part in a launch tour to Burma and Thailand. Dialog Dini Hari were celebrating the launch of their latest album, *Tentang Rumahku*, but Dadang was also planning a tour to Australia as part of a new duo project with an Australian drummer, A Conscious Coup.

The Hydrant and Discotion Pill were largely inactive from 2012 onward, citing family obligations as the primary obstacle to performing regularly. The Hydrant did

contribute a song to the compilation album *Bali Bergerak*, however, and gigged irregularly in Kuta and Sanur. Suicidal Sinatra continued to perform on a near weekly basis, often accepting gigs in Java; but they have yet to release their next album, which was promised in 2012. While Nymphaea was one of the most vocal supporters for the anti-reclamation movement, as of late 2014, they had made no definitive plans for another album or tour to Jakarta. Sari continued to make guest appearances with bands Devildice, Superman Is Dead, and Dialog Dini Hari, however, and Nymphaea guitarist Sony was picked up by Superman is Dead to become their lead guitarist.

Of course, an artist's influence may outlive his active gigging years, as founding member of Dialog Dini Hari Ian Stevenson demonstrates. Throughout the 2000s, Ian made infrequent appearances at local gigs and was often invited to join bands like Dialog Dini Hari and Navicula on stage. He operated a home studio in northern Sanur, where Navicula recorded several of the tracks for their 2013 album *Love Bomb*. He also wrote and sold songs to pop stars in Jakarta. Ian was best known, however, for his popular rock band Kaimsasikun, which formed in 1999 and officially broke up in 2006 after years of inactivity. Dethu (and many others) called Kaimsasikun one of Bali's top three bands ever (alongside SID and Navicula, 2012), and many artists continued to talk about how good the band was, even as late as 2014.

Terminology, too, has changed, and acceptance for the word "indie" to describe these artists has significantly wanted since the research began. In mid-2014, having lived in Jakarta and apart from Bali's indie scene for more than ten months, I contacted Dethu to compare notes about how terminology evolved over the years. I asked him if he would still consider artists like Dialog Dini Hari, Nosstress, Navicula, and Superman is Dead as

part of the same scene and, if so, what would he call it. It had been more than five years since I posed the same question to him. To my relief, he replied that yes, these artists do share something in common. Having lost interest in the term “indie,” however, since its cooption by the mainstream music industry and consumer brands, he referred to their collectively assembled scene as *skena alternatif*, an alternative scene (Dethu, interview, 2014).

I then contacted *Rolling Stone Indonesia* writer Wendi Putranto, who is familiar with all of these artists (and friends with the members of Dialog Dini Hari, Navicula, and Superman is Dead) and asked for his opinion: He replied “Really the only representative term is indie” (Putranto, interview, 2014).¹⁵ We then discussed the difficulties that using this term present—primarily that it may be associated with particular styles of music or an outdated mode of understanding professional music practice, based on the 1980s and 90s punk model of DIY. He agreed that this was problematic, but also concurred that to call the music “popular,” as I told him my colleagues in ethnomusicology might—in order to distinguish this project from a study of, say, gamelan—was not appropriate for two reasons: a) With the exception of SID, the artists at the center of this study are not widely known in Indonesia and b) the artists objected to being called “popular” because that term suggests a conformity to mainstream pop aesthetics. “Yup, absolutely right,” Wendi replied. “That’s why it should be called indie music, Bekah. The term [indie] is popular among the mainstream. Although it’s overrated now.”¹⁶

Ultimately, however, the terminology selected was only a preoccupation for a select few who, like me, were struggling to objectify in writing the styles that

¹⁵ “Cuma istilah yang mewakili mungkin cuma: indie.”

¹⁶ Yup, betul sekali. Makanya disebut sebagai music indie, Bekah. Istilah itu populer di kalangan mainstream. Walau overrated now.”

distinguished these artists from their “mainstream” counterparts—though we never seemed to be as concerned with what, exactly, constituted the mainstream. The network of music producers at the heart of this study, however, continued to make music together, irrespective of our personal struggles to give their scene a name.

“Bersama Kita” by Nosstress¹⁷

*Trying to always find
what we’re looking for
And remain always together
In what we think and endure
All the stories in every life
Will not always be beautiful
And will not always be grim
Try to always face it
And when you’re not able to face it all
Wrap your body close with ours
And there will be nothing that we cannot face
Together with us
Face it with us*

John Blacking argues that music is not only reflective of human relations; it is also generative (1995, 223). Framed phenomenologically, the practices of individuals making music can be a powerful means to debate—and shape—predominant taken-for-granted beliefs within society. The music-related practices outlined here—which only

¹⁷ Mencoba selalu temukan
apa yang ingin kita cari
Dan tetap selalu bersama
dalam pikir dan menjalani
Semua cerita dalam setiap hidup
takkan selamanya indah
takkan selamanya buruk
Coba selalu hadapi
Disaat kau tak mampu hadapi semua
Dekapkan badanmu di dekat kita
Dan tak akan ada yang tak bisa kita hadapi
Mari bersama kita
Hadapi dengan kita

represent a selection of the entire range of practices of indie musicians in Bali—ritualized music experience (Fonarow 2006, 98) and forged social relationships; but they were also directed towards larger goals than entertainment, career success, or even social belonging.

By the end of 2014, Bali was once again an island in crisis. Tourism had mushroomed to significantly exceed pre-bomb numbers, with more than four million visitors coming to the island every year and an equal number of domestic visitors choosing Bali for their annual vacations. Tourism expansion had placed tremendous strain on public infrastructure, and the Minister of the Environment predicted that Bali would experience a water shortage crisis in 2015. Waste management remained a fundamental problem: based on a 2013 study, the island produced more than 20,000 cubic meters of garbage every day, and 15,000 cubic meters of this waste was disposed in roadside gutters and illegal dumps, only to find its way back to the ocean (Paradigm Shift Project). While these issues constituted grave environmental emergencies for the island, tourism and related infrastructure continued to grow, while resources to address problems like clean water and waste management were severely lacking.

Indie scene leaders Robi, Dethu, Jerinx, Dodix (Superman Is Dead's manager) and many others have frequently commented on these issues via social media and even taken to the streets (*aksi turun ke jalan*) to work toward a solution: SID frequently organized beach cleanups, and Robi served as a consultant for IDEP and a documentary film by Canadian-based nonprofit Paradigm Shift Project to address the waste management issue. In 2012 he recorded a song, "Tolak Tas Kresek" (Ban the Plastic Bag), released by IDEP, to try to discourage the use of single-use plastic bags.

Throughout most of 2014, however, collective activist attention within the indie scene was directed at a single development project slated to reshape southern Bali: A land reclamation project, erroneously publicized as a “revitalization” (*revitalisasi*) program, which would support the creation of new islands just off the coast of Benoa by dredging up and dumping soil into the ocean. Only large-scale investors were being considered for new projects in the region, which have ranged from a Formula 1 racetrack to private luxury residences, a mega mall golf course, and a Disneyland. Should this continue, small-scale businesses will be squeezed out, local fishermen and residents will not have access to the area, and there will be significant environmental repercussions, including the disruption of seawater flow, thus damaging the delicate marine ecosystem (Bell, 2014). WALHI (Indonesian Environment Forum), Bali chapter, under the leadership of Gendo Suardana, has pursued legal action to stall the project. However in 2013, in a letter overturning his own ruling against the program, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono issued Presidential Order 51 (Peraturan President), to provide a development permit to Jakartan multi-millionaire and land investor Tomy Winata.

WALHI Bali’s initiatives to stop the reclamation project have motivated a wide-reaching opposition movement uniting citizens of Benoa and southern Bali, musicians, artists, poets, and activists under the mantra “Bali Tolak Reklamasi” (Bali Rejects Land Reclamation). Musicians, in particular, have supported Gendo’s efforts through street rallies, concerts, and media appearances. That musicians have unequivocally condemned the project is a result of the collective experience with the fallout from overdevelopment. For example, Jerinx’s Kuta neighborhood (the site of the first Bali bombings), has been completely transformed into a concrete playpen for drunken foreign and domestic tourists

(in his own lifetime). They have also observed how damaging a reclamation project will be, as evidenced by how the first reclamation project in Bali laid to waste the harbor and beaches at Serangan, essentially destroying the livelihood and ecosystem in this once peaceful coastal village without attracting any additional tourists. They also count Gendo as one of their closest acquaintances. In 2005, Gendo achieved local notoriety among indie scene participants—Prima Geekssmile once called him the Che Guevara of Bali (interview, 2009)—when he was arrested and imprisoned for publicly burning a photograph of President SBY. Prior to that, in the 1990s, he was actively involved in protests against the land reclamation project that destroyed Serangan Island.

The artists most heavily involved in the anti-reclamation movement were punk SID, Nosstress, and Nymphaea, but all artists highlighted within this study (with the exception of Discotion Pill) have participated to some degree in supporting this cause. The Hydrant, SID, Navicula, and Nosstress each contributed tracks to the *Bali Bergerak* album, for example. A nuanced social media campaign has been running for more than a year, with daily posts by Jerinx SID's official social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter, Dethu, Dodix, Anom Darsana, and others. In September 2014, Dethu worked together with *Rolling Stone Indonesia* to hold an awareness concert at their Jakarta headquarters. Bands Nosstress, Navicula, Geekssmile, and SID performed at the Konser Svara Bumi (Concert for the Voice of the Earth) and packed the small venue with more than 500 people.

On 16 October, the Forum Rakyat Bali Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa (ForBALI) ForBali collective, which includes artists, activists, and members of WALHI, organized Bali Tolak Reklamasi Art Event, an all-day festival held in Padang Galak, Kesiman. 250

musicians, dancers, and visual artists took part in this mega event, featuring four stages (including one lifted off the ground by a crane, a symbol of Bali's salvation from drowning if the reclamation project moves forward. Among the performing artists were SID, Indonesian folk legend Sawung Jabo, Geekssmile, Nymphaea, Nosstress, Dialog Dini Hari, Made Mawut, The Hydrant, and many of the first-generation metal and punk acts popular in the 1990s and early 2000s (and at the center of Baulch's study), including The Djihad, Natterjack, and The Dissland. The event also featured traditional performances of *beleganjur* and *selonding* by Mekar Bhuana and a modern dance performance by Jogjane dancer Tebo Aumbara. Made Bayak earned national media attention for the event by staging a performance art piece in which he was buried in black dirt by a bulldozer, symbolizing reclamation process and Bali's future. Local jazz legends like trumpeter Rio Sidik, pianist Erik Sondhy, bassist Ito Kurdhi, and drummer Edy Siswanto shared the stage with Bali's many rock bands, and Erick Est created a stunning video clip of the festivities, using footage collected from a drone camera hovering above the festival grounds. Everyone involved volunteered his or her time. Anom Darsana organized the production with his own studio team and the support of Pregina to provide the sound equipment. The village of Kesiman also publicly supported the event, with the head of the village making an appearance. Traditional Balinese kites (*layang layang*) with their long, dramatic tails in the sacred colors of the *tridatu* (white, black, and red) flew overhead, bearing the writing "Tolak Reklamasi" on the tails. An estimated 6,000 people attended the free event.

The event, which convened multiple genres and generations of performers to voice their collective rejection of this project, demonstrates that social and environmental

activism are not exclusive domains of the indie scene—though, generally, bands like SID and Navicula have been much more socially engaged than, say, gamelan groups or jazz artists. It also demonstrates that, in some circumstances, music may not be enough to cultivate the kind of collective commitment to a music scene that I have observed in Bali. In fact, only two other events attracted a local audience of this size during my time in Bali: The Soundrenaline festival in 2009 and the HIV and AIDS awareness concert I organized in Ubud in 2012. While national accolades and professional success may be sources of pride for artists and others in the scene, engagement around a social or environmental issue has proven to be essential to sustaining active involvement with indie music in Bali.

By the end of 2014 Bali Tolak Reklamasi was still a primary preoccupation for the majority of artists at the center of this study. When SID took to the stage at the Anugerah Musik Indonesia (AMI) awards ceremony in Jakarta to collect their 3rd AMI trophy for best rock band or duo, they dedicated the award to the Bali Tolak Reklamasi movement, in front of a live audience of thousands for a televised event viewed by millions. One may assume that public condemnation of the reclamation project by high profile musicians—together with their prominence in the media—has meant that, for a general public, musicians have been the strongest opponents to the land reclamation project. As of the completion of this project, reclamation was still moving forward, though Dethu and Sarah have both suggested SBY's letter will be overturned. WALHI's legal team is planning to file a petition by early 2015. But while the project's implementation depends ultimately on a judicial ruling rather than the opinions of artists or activists, the role of musicians in this case should not be underestimated. As Berger

argues, “ideological expression often is intended to operate in a different fashion—to raise consciousness, heighten awareness, instill a perspective, educate, or inform” (2009, 128). What is their objective? They hope to make enough collective noise to force the new administration to take their objections seriously. The movement commenced with an environmental watch group that counted musicians among its closest supporters. These musicians, who have the privilege of the stage and cache with the national media spread the message to their immediate fanbase and a general audience nationwide and encouraged their involvement in direct action. A collective ideology that began with a few environmental activists, musicians, and other music professionals has now spread to shape public debate about tourism development in Bali, even as far as the capital. In November 2014, both *Kompas* and *Tempo*, the nation’s largest dailies, had run feature stories, not about the development project, but about the activists (and artist activists) condemning it.

Let Us Cast Shadows

My own research began as a traditional undertaking, by the standards set within ethnomusicology to date. It led me to a foreign country and culture and a finite period of focused “data gathering.” I have yet to return to the confines of my university and home country, however, and the period of data gathering never really concluded. Much of my professional work involves the characters and activities of my original ethnographic project. After residing in Indonesia for six years, finding work, and obtaining a residency permit, I have had my field site evolve into home. Research relationships have evolved into friendships and professional alliances. Any residual analytical distance I created

while defining myself as a “researcher” and others as “researched” has slowly dissolved.

As has been reiterated throughout this project, within the indie scene, mutual benefit was a prerequisite for deepening intimacy, and professional relationships were almost always based on personal friendships. During research, opportunities for mutual reward were limited and my goals self-serving. This, inevitably, led to an unbalanced exchange of knowledge, where research participants helped me tremendously but I could do little to answer their support, short of editing English language lyrics, buying rounds of beers after gigs, contributing to tour fundraisers, or occasionally covering studio recording or rehearsal fees. Upon entering the profession of event production, I was capable of extending professional opportunities to others. Recognizing that theoretical and pragmatic objectives are not mutually exclusive, advocates for public anthropology or ethnomusicology argue for what Peacock describes as a “synergy between theory and practice” (1997, 13).

In her contribution to *Shadows in the Field*, Michelle Kisliuk asks, “Is there a way to determine what is or qualifies as field research, or to distinguish between who is or is not a field researcher?” (Kisliuk 2008). Coerced by predecessors and disciplinary tradition, funding contracts, and degree requirements (Barz and Cooley 2008), we “researchers” codify what we do as “research,” a finite experience with a timeline for completion. Ethnographic research requires the observation of and participation in human interaction that we often call “fieldwork,” based on the tendency that such research takes place in a bounded space, often distinguished from home. Of course, the field can refer to a place, idea, or timeframe in history, and research may be conducted among strangers or neighbors.

Modern ethnographers take for granted that our role within the research relationship impacts the individuals and communities with whom we work. We all cast shadows in the field (Barz and Cooley 2008); some longer than others. Removed objectivity is neither an imagined possibility nor an ideal, and our relationships in the field and beyond challenge us to define ourselves as much as others and to scrutinize our disciplines as much as the stuff of research. Degrees of public service vary. For some, applied work is a prerequisite for any student of human culture (Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006). For others, pragmatic action, or “action-oriented work” (Van Buren 2010, 204) is a primary professional objective. Context and opportunity determine where such work is needed or possible (Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006, 194). For all, the professional expectations atop the ivory tower continue to overshadow alternative careers and professional fraternities.

Holmes and Marcus write, “Working amid and on collaborations significantly shifts the purposes of ethnography from description and analysis, inevitably distanced practices for which it has settled, to a deferral to subjects’ modes of knowing, a function to which ethnography has long aspired” (2008, 82). Of course, subjects’ modes of knowing also involve description and analysis; yet they will likely require alternative modes for presentation. Such alternative modes, which not only elucidate crucial cultural understandings but also may positively supplement and even supersede conventional academic texts, avoid the esoteric “insiders’” register accessible only to a privileged few.

For several years following the finite, grant-sponsored research period, I was lucky to be able to continue working in partnership with many of the musicians, managers, writers, sound engineers, and venue owners who were once research

consultants. My professional work in Bali did not preclude “academic” pursuits, however: I continued to share my work via traditional channels, such as conference presentations, peer-reviewed articles, and university lectures. The professional life of an ethnomusicologist today need not be defined by a single job title and its associated obligations and activities. Rather, it may involve multiple domains of practice, including ethnographic research, peer-reviewed publications, and college course development—the observational/theoretical/academic end of the continuum—as well as concert production, radio and television programming, and artist advocacy—the participatory/practical/public works end. Each domain requires a consideration of the positions, beliefs, and objectives of others—be they interviewees, performers, or co-workers—which will impact what, inevitably, is co-produced.

If the majority of ethnomusicologists choose to remain ideologically removed from our “objects” of research, as Philip Bohlman has charged (1993) and consider academic appointments as the only viable option for professionalism, then it may be time to reconsider our humanistic and professional obligations at the individual and institutional levels: As individual researchers we document social justice ethics in practice, as well as bring our own personal ethics into dialogue with those of our consultants. As an institution, we should reach a consensus about how we can maintain a commitment to both respect human diversity and enact normative ethics, where we agree human rights are at stake. Of course, engaging in advocacy as ethnomusicologists is risky, and we may, at times, find it difficult to distinguish between advocacy and “moral imperialism,” (Hernández-Trujol 2002, quoted in Goodale 2006). But is it not time that we engage in mutual risk with our research consultants (See Gamson 1991)? *Injustice* is a

dehumanizing predicament (ibid.), and ethnomusicologists contribute critical studies of how the performing arts restore our humanity. While we cannot predict the effectiveness of our own actions or those of our consultants, as students of human culture, we also cannot individually or institutionally meet injustice with complacency.

Music as Philosophy, Ethics, Ritual

Berger and Luckmann write,

The reality of everyday life...[is] an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others...I know that my natural attitude to this world corresponds to the natural attitude of others, that they also comprehend the objectifications by which this world is ordered, that they also organize this world around the 'here and now' of *their* being in it and have projects for working in it. I also know, of course, that the others have a perspective on this common world that is not identical with mine (23).

In 2009, when I first met SID, I asked the band about Bali's music scene and its vitality. Bassist Eka replied confidently, "[It's] very impressive!"¹⁸ (interview, 2009). He repeated that phrase several times and explained that with the increasing number of new bands writing original material, recording albums, and organizing concerts, what was once known as underground music has slowly risen to the surface and become a professionally competitive industry. When I posed the same question to Robi of Navicula, he replied with his favorite mantra, "Big scene makes a big band" (interview, 2009). He continued, "I am aware, you are an independent band. You want to succeed. But you can't do that as a single musician. You have to make the scene succeed alongside

¹⁸"Sangat kagum!"

you. If the scene is big, your band is big. It's one package."¹⁹ Both Eka and Robi's responses indicate that hard work and collaboration were primary values that allowed this independent music scene to flourish. Their shared goal was to broaden the palette for creative exploration among their fellow artists: "We want to make something that is not uniform. Something more colorful. Something better," Robi said (interview, 2010).¹ Between them, SID and Navicula had played together for more than 17 years, earned major label contracts, recorded multiple albums, achieved a strong national fanbase, and toured internationally to Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, the United States, and Canada.

When I first met Igo, he explained that the late 2000s marked the first time that local (lokal) bands could imagine music as a profession: "So public belief regarding music is now that it can become an option, a profession. So there is a new vision for music," (Igo, interview, 2009).²⁰ The professionalization of non-mainstream music in Bali played contributed significantly to the cultivation of a healthy and sustainable scene. It has opened up opportunities for a variety of professionals to play a part and enabled Bali to stand on even ground, not only with other indie scenes in Indonesia, but worldwide. As Robi explained, "The scene in Bali is growing healthily. It's expanding. There are events. There is a system already forming. Within the scene there are a lot of parties involved. Artists, musicians, event organizers, sponsors, the media. It is all part of a system now that is working. And it is already happening in Bali..."²¹ By the end of

¹⁹ "Saya sadar. Kamu sebagai band independen. Kamu mau besar. Kamu tidak bisa sebagai satu musisi aja besar. *You have to make the scene big together with you.* Kalau itu scene besar, *your band big.* Karena satu paket."

²⁰ "Jadi, sebuah kepercayaan publik terhadap musik itu jadi sebuah opsi, profesi. Jadi sebuah visi baru ya."

²¹ "Scene di Bali tumbuh sehat ya. Maksudnya, bertambah, *event* ada, sistemnya udah kebentuk. Kalo *scene* itu kan banyak pihak terlibat. Banyak pihak *involve*. Seniman, musisi...*event organizer*, sponsor, media. Ini semua sudah sistem ini sudah bekerja simultan. Dan itu sudah terjadi di Bali..."

2014, however, scene leaders like Robi were not preoccupied with professional success. They had set their sights on halting the development project in Benoa Harbor.

This project has built upon other academic works on popular music in Indonesia (Baulch 2007, Wallach 2008, Luvaas 2013), not only to reveal yet another stratum of Indonesian music, but also to provoke a view of music-making through a phenomenological lens that renders music as inseparable from its producers and its meaning as inseparable from the individuals who make or receive it. Identifying the routes of indie music in Indonesia—via audio recording or print, broadcast, or digital communications media—reveals a well-tread path from the West to the East and helps to contextualize the long presence of “foreign” (*asing*) resources for “local” (*lokal*), creative undertakings. This study has problematized, however, the notion that the musical styles that define the indie scene were experienced as foreign imports, rather than as local products. It has explicated the symbolic universe of the indie scene by tracing its history through the individuals who constituted it. A phenomenological digging is a difficult undertaking, for as Berger and Luckmann argue, “these products of human consciousness, by their very nature, present themselves as full-blown and inevitable totalities” (1966, 97.). By starting with the city as the landscape in which the indie scene took root and exploring musical versatility as the soundscape that defines southern Bali, however, this project outlined how politics and violence, tourism and capitalism have been interconnected and given birth to—and sometimes overshadowed—alternative ways of musically being in the world. It examined indie music’s place among other alternative soundworlds and suggested that such worlds can coexist, often in mutual oblivion. With the exception of a few musical outliers, the worlds of “traditional” and “modern” musics

remained largely mutually exclusive, though that does not mean that one is local and the other, foreign—at least not from the indie practitioner’s perspective.

This project examined the music practices that define young musicians’ first exposure to the punk, metal, grunge, and other rock musics that dominate the indie scene. The guitar was symbolic for a foray into this musical alternative, and musicians playing together in home studios and rehearsal spaces provided marked the earliest opportunities for teenagers to become bandmates—to learn and write songs together and prepare to perform for an audience. Performance contexts—from band competitions to university department anniversaries and the rite of passage that was a Twice Bar gig—all provided opportunities for performers and audiences to cultivate that coveted atmosphere of shared excitement and euphoria—of Schutz’s inner time. Crucial to all scene practices was making the time for casual hanging out, or *nongkrong*: an activity that, at first glance was extra-musical and inessential, but in fact was where most of the work to build scene solidarity and creative common ground happened in casual and jovial dialogue.

The study has frequently returned to the 2002 bombings to examine how their impact was recollected among research participants and how early successes for Superman Is Dead, Navicula, and The Hydrant inspired other bands to imagine the possibility of signing to a major label and achieving national notoriety. As Berger and Luckmann write, “*All* roles represent the institutional order in the afore-mentioned sense. *Some* roles, however, symbolically represent that order in its totality more than others. Such roles are of great strategic importance in a society, since they represent not only this or that institution, but the integration of all institutions in a meaningful world” (1966, 76). Individuals like Dethu, Robi, Jerinx, and others cultivated the key identifiers for

professionalism, including a signature style, gig fees, album recording, and touring nationally and even internationally. Recording industry infrastructure, which first developed after the bombings, helped to support bands' professional activities. New professionals, including photographers, managers, sound engineers, and visual artists became important collaborators for musicians who, by the late 2000s, were less interested in major record label contracts and turned, instead, to independent channels for album distribution and sponsorship. Due to the ongoing problem of music piracy, several artists carried out alternative strategies for earning money from their music, and merchandise sales and additional roles for musicians as teachers, music producers, graphic artists, clothing designers, and venue owners helped them to supplement their incomes and continue to play music together. A changing attitude toward the hard copy album as a collector's item and digital recordings as an acceptable final product led to the increasing importance of the Internet for disseminating music, as well as conducting important professional communications. Despite their capacities as professional recording artists, bands like Nymphaea and Navicula suffered from a lack of local renown, and national touring was a means to cultivate a larger following outside of Bali, as well as network with national media. Ultimately, however, many artists claimed the goal of achieving national or international acclaim was not only for personal gain, but also a matter of pride in representing Bali.

This project has argued that music-related practices were central to deepening intimacy among friends and collaborators. Circling back repeatedly to the performance setting as a finite province for cultivating intimacy through the intensity of mutual tuning-in—or, put differently, the “turning away of attention from the reality of everyday

life” (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 25) intensified feelings of social closeness. Borrowing Feld’s poetic description, in such moments, most frequently experienced in live performance, they have “experienced musical intimacies, intimacies of playing together, and repeatedly, time after time, event after event, year after year, the constancy of being in the music together, establishing closeness through skilled cocreation, the trust and pleasures of being in heightened and almost always nonverbal collaboration felt and experienced as groove” (2012, 2193).

Artistic facility and shared generic affinities were examined as the means for musicians and their fans to find common ground. By identifying social alliances, indie scene participants also developed an understanding of who they were as contributing professionals, and professional relationships were contingent upon personal friendships. Of course, no musical network can accommodate all musical styles or subjectivities, and genres like *dangdut* and *pop Bali* were cast out of the indie scene by individuals’ stances on musical style. As Berger and Luckmann write, “In the face-to-face situation the other is appresented to me in a vivid present shared by both of us. I know that in the same vivid present I am appresented to him” (1964, 28). The study also examined the importance of face-to-face interaction, enabled primarily by having casual settings for hanging out (*tempat nongkrong*).

Practices including paid performance and touring, album production, merchandise distribution, and media relations—practices commonly referred to as the music industry—were benchmarks for professionalism and catalysts for the creative and social vitality of indie music in Bali. A distinction between amateur and professional was measured, not only by who gets paid, but also on how industry peers, audiences, and the

media identified the “masters” of musical craft. The broader professionalization of the scene—and subsequently its sustainability—resulted from both adequate compensation for creative work and a “directing group,” in symbolic interactionist terms, that possessed the collective facility across domains of music practice to pursue professional careers and inspire others to do the same.

In addition to documenting a little-known music history within popular music studies, this study identified core professional practices that sustained an otherwise untenable music scene. “Becoming a legend,” or achieving national and international acclaim, was not the terminal goal of indie professionalism, however. Rather, a commitment to the creative, social, and environmental vitality of Bali as “home” motivated music producers to both excel in their craft and apply their work toward addressing the island’s current development crises—on and off the stage.

Finally, the study examined a collective commitment to activism in music as a means to deepen bonds by coalescing attention around core social and environmental issues. By looking at the historical precedence for activism among musicians, as well as the strategies for communicating on such issues—including songwriting, charity and awareness concerts, and partnerships with nonprofits and other social and environmental watchdogs—the question of whether music makes a difference was replaced with the phenomenological proposition that, where ideologies on activism matter among musicians, artistic engagement to facilitate change is valuable in and of itself. As Blumer writes on the position of symbolic interactionism, “the meanings that things have for human beings are central in their own right” (1993, 2). Concomitant with the activist practices that deepened scenic commitment were hardship realities like financial burdens,

family obligations, and a lack of performance venues and government support, as well as both internal elitist attitudes and external attitudes stereotyping rock that threatened to unravel the indie scene. Yet through the accumulated experiences of making music together, those who continued to attend to the scene continued to find meaning in this expressive culture.

Taking up Berger's call for practice-oriented research, this study departs from a model of culture as a vessel into which fit individuals that confirm the logic of the system in order to examine an impressively cohesive—yet constantly in flux—music scene as a network of individuals reacting to one another and making sense of their world through their interaction. Individual scene participants often drew attention to this network without prompting, as scene participants were consciously aware of how their subjectivities were developed in relation to others and how their actions, in concert with others, were essential for achieving artistic, professional, or activist goals.

John Blacking (1995: 36) argues that “Music cannot instill a sense of fellowship...The best that it can do is to confirm situations that already exist”(140). A reification of music as a catalyst for camaraderies is not uncommon within ethnomusicology, and unfortunately, it glosses over the fact that a) human beings make music; it does not exist outside of its production in time; and b) such music-related practices as performance can, indeed, cultivate or disrupt fellowship. It is neither music that creates fellowship, nor music that reflects that fellowship. Human beings create fellowship through social interaction—which may or may not involve music. Getting to know individuals and examining the ways in which specific practices may bring them together brings the ethnomusicologist closer to understanding music's significance in

people's lives. It also avoids denying human agency and treating music as a product distinguishable from its production. Thus, this study contends that the object of ethnomusicology should not be music *in* or *as* culture because neither music nor culture are an object. Ethnomusicology should direct theoretical inquiry toward a study of the human actions—and interactions—that give rise to music.

A practice-based approach avoids separating text from context, imagining text as material, and misrepresenting context as bounded entity. If culture is defined as the actively achieved accumulation of experience, then there is room to explore whether culture may refer to more than individuals who share a common mother tongue, religion, ethnicity, or nation. It allows for the possibility that I, as a Caucasian ethnomusicologist from the Southeastern United States may, through the accumulation of experience, share much in common with a Balinese Hindu musician from Denpasar. We find common ground, not only through the study of our respective mother tongues, religions, and national histories, but also by sharing particular stances toward musics that we value as fans, artists, and music professionals. This, in my argument, indicates ways in which our accumulation of shared experience leads us to a new level of social intimacy—and to a shared home in music.

In 2005, back in that dusty cassette shop in Kerambitan, my own theoretical lens created a blind spot to the “valual and affective quality,” in Harris Berger's terms (2009, 15), of indie artists' musical propensities as individually selected and historically and socially localized. But when I shed the assumption that Seattle Sound or California punk or psychedelic rock was more mine than theirs—and that their influences were exclusively foreign—I realized that an examination of musical *routes* need not undermine

rock's deep *roots* in "local" music practice. By examining artists' "stances" toward their music experience, we may bracket the logics of cultural imperialism or transnational flows often reified in popular music studies that may either a) conflate origins with authenticity or b) ignore music's geographical rootedness.

In a phenomenological approach to music experience, Berger writes that we are all always "grappling" with the meaning that music has for us, and the valual and affective quality of our grappling becomes our "stance" toward that music (5, 2009). The vernacular cosmopolitanism of the indie scene contradicts Turino's definition of cosmopolitanist expression as formations that "are not traced to any particular homeland" (2013, 118). Bali's indie scene participants shared a stance on rock, blues, punk, metal, hip hop, folk, and other popular music genres as homegrown expressive cultures. Though they were fully aware of music's routes, they fell in love as teenagers and young adults with expressive cultures that became fully embedded in their creative imaginings. And embedded within these artists' stories are lessons for shaping public consensus to achieve positive change, and about what current trajectories exist for "peripheral" musicians to gain international respect. No mere devotees of the bands they admired in their youth, nor passive pawns in a cutthroat music industry that determines their fate, they were trailblazers for Indonesian rock music and activism in music. Their story rightly elicits praise for creative, collaborative work and a visionary ethos. Yet the propensities of popular music disciplines may reduce their work to (at best) symbolic resistance to an autochthonous local or (at worst) xenocentrism. To do so is to lose the plot.

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Interviews

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Bayak, Made, 29 November 2009. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Bear, Nahko. 15 May 2012. Ubud, Indonesia.

Bobbi (Superman Is Dead), 4 April 2009. Kuta, Indonesia.

Dadang (Navicula, Dialog Dini Hari), 15 July 2009. Jakarta, Indonesia.

Darsana, Anom. 9 September 2010. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Dethu, Rudolf, 12 October 2014. Facebook Commentary.

_____, 21 September 2014. Email Correspondence.

_____, 25 July 2014. Telephone Interview.

_____, 10 April 2010. Sanur, Indonesia.

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Dizta (Discotion Pill), 3 March 2009. Kuta, Indonesia.

Eka (Scared of Bums), 2 April 2010. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Eka (Superman Is Dead), 4 April 2009. Kuta, Indonesia.

Est, Erick, 13 October 2014. Jakarta, Indonesia.

Gung Bagus (Discotion Pill), 3 March 2009. Kuta, Indonesia.

Igo Blado, 9 February 2009. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Jerinx (Superman Is Dead), 4 April 2009. Kuta, Indonesia.

Mantra, Bagus. 24 February 2011. Ubud, Indonesia.

Marmar (Psychopathic), 13 September 2011. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Marsello (The Hydrant), 8 April 2013. Kuta, Indonesia.

Moira, Lakota, 2 May 2010. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Monez, 6 April 2010. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Nova (Scared of Bums), 2 April 2010. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Prima (Geekssmile), 12 October 2014. Facebook Commentary.

_____, 29 November 2009. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Putranto, Wendi, 25 July 2014. Telephone Interview.

_____, Putranto, Wendi. 19 February 2010. Jakarta, Indonesia.

Robi (Navicula), 12 October 2014. Facebook Commentary.

_____, 15 July 2012. Denpasar, Indonesia.

_____, 2 May 2010. Denpasar, Indonesia.

_____, 25 February 2009. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Sari (Nymphaea), 3 April 2010. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Sianturi, Aldo, 19 February 2010. Jakarta, Indonesia.

Stevenson, Ian Joshua, 12 October 2014. Facebook Commentary.

Yudha (Discotion Pill), 3 March 2009. Kuta, Indonesia.

Yuri (Geekssmile), 29 November 2009. Denpasar, Indonesia.

Zio (Dialog Din Hari), 12 October 2014. Facebook Commentary.

Discography

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Gede Robi. 2014. *Son of a Witch*.

Geekssmile. 2011. *Upeti untuk Macan Indonesia* (Tribute to the Indonesian tiger). Antida Records.

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Scared of Bums. 2007. *Scared of Bums*.

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The Hydrant. 2009. *Bali Bandidos*.

Various Artists. 2014. *Bali Bergerak*.

Various Artists. *Green Monster: When They Strike Back*. 2009.

Curriculum Vitae, Rebekah E. Moore

Email: rebekah.musicmatters@gmail.com

EDUCATION

- March 2015: Doctor of Philosophy, Ethnomusicology, Indiana University, USA
Dissertation: "Indie Music in Post-bomb Bali: Participant Practices, Scene Subjectivities"
- December 2004: Master of Arts, Music (Ethnomusicology Concentration),
University of Maryland, USA
Thesis: "Rewriting the Soundscape: Towards a New Understanding of Sámi Popular Music and Identity in the New Millennium"
- May 2002: Bachelor of Arts, Music, Anthropology Minor,
University of North Carolina, Greensboro, USA

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND HONORS

- College Arts Humanities Institute, Indiana University Travel Grant (2015)
- NZAID Programme Grant for HIV & AIDS education program "Ayo Kita Bicara HIV & AIDS (Hey! Let's Talk about HIV & AIDS)" (Principal Administrator), Indonesia (2013)
- Australia Indonesia Institute Cultural Programs Grant for "Panggung Bersatu: An Australian – Indonesian Musical Collaboration" (Principal Administrator), Indonesia (2013)
- Embassy of the United States (Indonesia) Cultural Programs Grant for "Beats 4 Life: Hip Hop Percussion Workshop with Tariq Snare (Native Deen, USA) (Principal Administrator), Bali, Indonesia (2012)
- Summer Scholar, National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute: Ethnomusicology and Global Culture, Connecticut, USA (2011)
- J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship to Indonesia, USA (2008)
- 2007-2008 Dorson Dissertation Research Award, Indiana University Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, USA (2008)
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship, Indonesian Language (Year Three), University of Wisconsin, USA (2008)

City of Bloomington Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Grant to the Indiana University African American Arts Institute for Black History Month exhibition, “Bridgwaters Family Photographs” (Principal Administrator), Bloomington, Indiana, USA (2008)

Recipient, Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship, Indonesian Language (Year Two), University of Wisconsin, USA (2007)

Recipient, Research Grant, Finlandia Foundation National Capitol Chapter, Washington DC, USA (2004)

Recipient, Research Matching Grant, Finlandia Foundation, Washington DC, USA (2004)

Recipient, Whitehead Foundation Scholarship for Academic Excellence, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, USA (1999)

Recipient, Meisenheimer Scholarship for Music, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, USA (1998)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teaching Appointments:

Spring 2011: Trainer and Lecturer, One Dollar for Music “Young Sounds of Lombok” Music Coach Education Program, Bali and Lombok, Indonesia

Fall 2005 – Museum Education Representative and Docent Trainer, Mathers
Fall 2007: Museum of World Cultures, Bloomington, IN

Fall 2005 – Associate Instructor, “World Music and Culture,” Indiana University
Spring 2006: Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Bloomington, IN

Summer, Winter 2004: Lecturer, “World Popular Musics and Identity,” University of Maryland School of Music, College Park, MD

Fall 2002 – Graduate Teaching Assistant, “World Popular Musics and Identity,”
Spring 2004: University of Maryland School of Music, College Park, MD

Concert, Festival, & Public Programs Production:

September 2013 Director of Programming, @america: A U.S. State Department
- March 2014: Center for American and Indonesian engagement (Interim appointment)

June 2011 – September 2013: Public Program Manager, Kryasta Guna Foundation: A performing arts and education foundation, Bali, Indonesia

June 2011 - September 2013: Program Manager, AYO! Kita Bicara HIV & AIDS: An HIV & AIDS education and outreach program

Other Professional Activities:

August 2006 – May 2008: Assistant to the Director, African American Arts Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

March - May 2008: Research Assistant, Traditional Arts Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana

January 2007: Organizer and presenter, roundtable discussion for the Ethnomusicology Students Association's Professional Development Series, "The Challenges of the World Music Ensemble," Indiana University

Spring 2006 - Fall 2007: Assistant Website Manager, Society for Ethnomusicology

Invited Lectures:

Course Lecture: "Cultural Imperialism or Cosmopolitanism: Whither the Music Flows." University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (2015)

Research Talk: "Music Activism and Ethnomusicology in Action: Lessons from the Field." Oberlin College and Conservatory, Ohio (2015)

Course Lecture: "Dispelling Musical Myths: An Ethnomusicologist's Perspective." Oberlin College and Conservatory, Ohio (2015)

Course Lecture: "Music Activism in Indonesia: Can It Make a Difference?" Oberlin College and Conservatory (2014)

Course Lecture: "Music and Resistance: Can Research Make a Difference?" Indiana University (2014)

Expert Talk: "The Joys and Challenges of Concert and Festival Production." Stenden University, Bali, Indonesia (2012)

Expert Talk: "The Many Soundworlds of Bali." Dharma Talk series, presented by Yayasan Kryasta Guna, Bali, Indonesia (2012)

Research Talk: “Musik Indie di Indonesia: Aspek-aspek Bisnis dan Budaya” (Indie Music in Indonesia: Business and Cultural Aspects). North Sumatra University, Medan, Indonesia (2010)

Course Lecture: “Rock and Politics.” St. Cloud State University, Minnesota (2008)

Course Lecture: “Music in Bali.” St. Cloud State University, Minnesota (2006)

Research Talk: “Towards a New Understanding of Sámi Popular Music and Identity in the New Millennium.” Annual Finn Grand Fest, Marquette, Michigan (2005)

Research Talk: “Sámi Popular Music and Identity in the New Millennium.” Annual joint meeting of the Finlandia Foundation and the American Scandinavian Association, McLean, Virginia (2005)

PUBLICATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

Peer-Reviewed Academic Publications:

“MyMusic, MyFreedom(?): The Troubled Pursuit of Musical and Intellectual Independence on the Internet in Indonesia.” *Asian Journal of Communication* 23(4), Special issue on popular music and the Internet. Kai Khiun Liew and Brenda Chan, editors (2013).

“Elevating the Underground: Claiming A Space for Indie Music Among Bali’s Many Soundworlds.” *Asian Music* 44(2). Jeremy Wallach, editor (2013).

“Work in the Field: Public Ethnomusicology and Collaborative Professionalism.” *Collaborative Anthropologies* 6. Amber Clifford, editor (2013).

Exhibitions:

Curator, “Bridgwaters Family Photographs: Celebrating Indiana University’s Black History.” Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center. Presented by the African American Arts Institute and the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Multicultural Affairs, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana USA (February 2008).

Co-curator (with Miriam Vidaver), “Lost and Found: Art Through Recycled Objects.” Mathers Museum of World Cultures, Bloomington, Indiana, USA (On exhibition September 2006 – November 2007).

Conference Proceedings:

“A City Cacophonous: Traversing Denpasar, Bali’s Disparate Soundworlds.” In Proceedings of the 2nd Symposium of the International Council for Traditional

Music: Performing Arts of Southeast Asia Study Group, Mohd Anis Md Nor, et al, editors (2013).

“Practicing Belonging in Bali’s Indie Music Scene.” In Proceedings of the 1st Symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music: Performing Arts of Southeast Asia Study Group, Mohd Anis Md Nor, et al, editors (2011).

Book Reviews

The Sámi People: Traditions in Transition, by Veli-Pekka Lehtola (2006 [2002]). In *Journal of Folklore Research: An International Journal of Folklore & Ethnomusicology*.
<http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/jfrr/article/view/2653/2529> (2009).

Phenomenology of a Puppet Theatre: Contemplations on the Art of Javanese Wayang Kulit, by Jan Mrázek (2005). In *Journal of Folklore Research: An International Journal of Folklore & Ethnomusicology*.
<http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/jfrr/article/view/2487/2363> (2007).

Selected Non-academic Publications:

“Green Grunge Goes Global” (Band Profile: Navicula, Bali Indonesia). *Hello Bali* 17(10) (2012).

“Rock Music and Social Activism on the Internet.” *Inside Indonesia* 110: New Social Media as a Tool for Activism. Thushara Dibley, Editor.
<http://www.insideindonesia.org/current-edition/rock-music-and-social-activism-on-the-internet> (2012).

“A Dose of Aural Healing” (Musician Profile: Nahko Bear, USA). *Hello Bali* 17(6) (2012).

“The After Sunset Nymphs” (Interviews with Club Manager Cindy Ishimine and Jasmine Haskell, aka DJ Mistral). *Hello Bali* 17(4) (2012).

“5 Rock: Where to Rock Out in Bali” (Venue Profile). *Hello Bali* 16(11) (2011).

“Rubbing the Rock Underbelly.” *Hello Bali* 16(9) (2011).

“Indietopia(?): Pertimbangan-pertimbangan oleh Seorang Etnomusikolog Amerika” (Indietopia(?): Considerations by an American Ethnomusicologist). *Bali Music Magazine* (2010).

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Dropping Love Bombs from Bali to LA: Navicula’s Music and Activism.” Annual Meeting of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music – US, Louisville, Kentucky, USA (2015).

“Indie in the City: Generic and Social Convergence in an Indonesian Soundworld.” Presenter, Panel Organizer and Chair, “The Generic Spider Web: Individual, Social, and Disciplinary Threads (And the Spaces In Between).” Annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA (2013).

“Work in the Field: Public Ethnomusicology and Collaborative Professionalism.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Chicago, Illinois, USA (2013).

“Unwitting Dissidents: The Aceh, Indonesia Punk Case.” Joint Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Society for Ethnomusicology, and Society for Music Theory, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA (2012).

“*Akarumput* (Grassroots) Online and On the Streets: Seeds Sown for Sustainable Living and Community Action in Bali.” International Institute for Asian Studies Conference: Bali in Global Asia: Between Modernization and Heritage Formation. Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia (2012).

“A City Cacophonous: Traversing Denpasar, Bali’s Disparate Soundworlds.” 2nd Symposium of the International Council of Traditional Music Performing Arts of Southeast Asia Study Group. Manila, Philippines (2012).

“‘Politricks’ and ‘Medical Mafia’: Rock and Social Justice in Indonesia.” Annual Meeting of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (Australia / New Zealand), Wellington, New Zealand (2011).

“Practicing Belonging in Bali’s Indie Music Scene.” 1st Symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music, Southeast Asia Study Group, Singapore (2010).

“The Pursuit of an Ideal Bali in Modern Musical Arts.” Annual J. William Fulbright Conference, Southeast Asia Region, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2009).

“The Podcast Ethnography: Presenting Sound, Enabling Dialogue.” Annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Columbus, Ohio (2007).

“Conversations with Balinese Musician I Nyoman Suadin and the Value of the Biographical Approach in Ethnomusicology.” Annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

2006 (February). “Sámi Popular Music and Identity in the New Millennium.” Annual meeting of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (USA), Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

Creative Activities:

Summer 2007, Member, University of Wisconsin Javanese Gamelan, Madison, WI
Summer 2008

August 2004 – Member, Gamelan Mitra Kusuma (Balinese Gamelan),
August 2006: Washington, DC

December 2002 – Co-director (with Michael Holmes), Kalevala Singers (Finnish Folk
May 2005: Choir), Washington, DC

August 2002 – Member, Gamelan Saraswati (Balinese Gamelan), College Park,
December 2004: MD

Languages:

English (native), Indonesian (professional fluency), Malay (conversational fluency),
Finnish (basic reading and conversational), German (basic reading)